Talent Abroad

A Review of Georgian Emigrants

OECD

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Foreword

Emigrants are often considered a loss for their country of origin but they can also play an important role in fostering trade and economic development, notably through the skills and contacts they have acquired abroad. If they choose to return, their re-integration into the labour market and society will be facilitated by the fact that they speak the local language, have specific social capital and possess local qualifications that are readily recognised by employers.

Drawing on the human resources of emigrants, however, necessitates maintaining links with them and pursuing policies adapted to the specific needs of each expatriate community. This entails, as a prerequisite, being able to identify precisely where, when and why people have left and what their socio-demographic characteristics and skills are, as well as gaining a proper understanding of the dynamics of the phenomenon and the aspirations of emigrants.

Statistical systems in countries of origin are generally poorly equipped to undertake this monitoring exercise. It is therefore helpful, if not essential, to compile information directly from destination country data sources. This is particularly challenging because it requires collecting data, based on comparable definitions and concepts, from a large number of countries across which emigrants are scattered. The OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), which pools census and survey data, makes it possible to identify individuals over time by place of birth as well as by education and labour market status. It is a powerful tool for use in undertaking this mapping exercise, especially when complemented by available national sources (e.g. consular data, specific surveys, analyses of social networks) and many other international data sources.

This series of country reviews entitled “Talent abroad” aims to provide an accurate, updated and dynamic picture of diasporas by individual countries of origin. On this basis, and by building on cumulated experiences regarding the movements of diasporas, it is possible to formulate public policy recommendations on how best to engage with emigrants and mobilise their skills to support economic development in their country of origin.

This volume focuses on Georgia, which, in recent years, has experienced significant economic, social and political changes. In view of the scale of emigration by the Georgian population in the 21st century, the Georgian authorities are seeking to gain a better understanding of this pool of talent based abroad. To that end, this review was commissioned by the German Co-operation Agency (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*, GIZ). The GIZ’s Programme Migration & Diaspora (PMD) supports partner countries in leveraging the positive effects of regular migration and diaspora engagement for their sustainable development. The PMD is implemented by the GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ). It is active in 23 partner countries around the world. The PMD supports partner countries in shaping development-oriented and socially responsible labour migration. It advises partner governments on migration policies and on promoting diaspora engagement for sustainable development.

The in-depth analysis of the Georgian diaspora presented in this OECD publication helps determine the economic potential of emigrants. How many emigrants are there, and where are they based? Are they of working age, and what is their level of education? What are the recent trends in terms of their number and socio-economic profile? What is their labour market presence in the host country and which occupations do they hold?

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Executive summary

Migration flows from Georgia to OECD countries have significantly increased since 2000

The crises prompted by the complex economic and political transitions faced by Georgia in the 1990s after the collapse of the USSR provoked large emigration flows of Georgian nationals, to the Russian Federation and to neighbouring countries mainly. In the 2000s, the increasing difficulty to migrate to the Russian Federation and the rising tensions between Georgia and the Russian Federation led to a diversification in destination countries. Annual legal migration flows from Georgia to OECD countries increased from about 1 400 persons in 2000 to 12 300 in 2010 and to more than 30 000 in 2019. Turkey and Germany now attract the largest flows of Georgian nationals in the OECD area (8 000 and 7 000 respectively in 2019). The other main OECD destination countries for Georgian nationals include Poland (4 200), Greece (3 000), and the United States (1 500).

The majority of residence permits issued by European countries are issued for work reasons

In recent years, more than half of residence permits issued by European countries to Georgian nationals have been issued for work reasons, while 25% were issued for humanitarian reasons and 13% for family reasons. However, the nature of migration flows from Georgia varies across destination countries. While Poland mostly issued seasonal work permits to Georgian nationals in 2019, Greece and Italy issued a substantial number of permits for humanitarian and family reasons. Furthermore, the 2017 authorisation to travel visa-free to the Schengen area led to a significant rise in the number of annual asylum claims, especially in France (8 000 in 2019).

Close to one in five Georgians express the intention to emigrate permanently

Among the Georgian population, 18% expressed the intention to emigrate permanently between 2010 and 2019, a share slightly higher than the average of selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries. However, about 50% of the Georgian population intended to emigrate temporarily, reflecting the importance of temporary labour migration flows from Georgia to countries such as Poland or Turkey. These emigration intentions are partly driven by the high unemployment and underemployment rates that have been prevailing since the fall of the USSR, which has pushed Georgians to seek better employment opportunities abroad.

Almost 300 000 Georgian emigrants live in the OECD area

The Georgian diaspora remains highly concentrated in the Russian Federation, which accounts for about 50% of the total emigrant population. The OECD area hosts only one-third of the total Georgian emigrant population, and more than 75% of Georgian emigrants in this area are concentrated in five countries – Greece, Israel, Turkey, the United States and Spain. Between 2000 and 2020, the number of Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries more than doubled, with the largest absolute increase observed in Greece, but mostly stagnating after the 2008 Global Recession. Turkey is set to gain prominence as a destination, registering the largest percentage increase in the same period, particularly after the elimination of a visa requirement in 2006.

The Georgian diaspora living in OECD countries is mostly composed of women of working age

In 2015/16, six out of ten Georgian emigrants in the OECD area were women, the second-highest share among Caucasian and Central Asian countries. Moreover, the share of Georgian emigrant women increased by 15% between 2000/01 and 2015/16. Georgian women are in high demand in the elderly care and domestic sectors of OECD countries. The increased difficulties to emigrate to the Russian Federation, a traditional destination for men, have also incentivised the emigration of Georgian women. In Turkey and Italy, women account for more than 80% of the Georgian emigrant population.

Georgian emigrants are on average less educated than the overall population of Georgia

In 2015/16, more than one-third of Georgian emigrants had a tertiary education. While the average educational attainment of Georgian emigrants increased between 2000/01 and 2015/16, it is still below the level of Georgia's population. The United States hosts the largest share of tertiary educated emigrants from Georgia. The OECD area is also an important destination for international students from Georgia: in 2019, 4 200 Georgian students were enrolled in a tertiary-level programme abroad and eight out of ten chose an OECD country. Germany hosts approximately half of all international students from Georgia and Turkey is gaining prominence as an educational destination.

Georgia has a high female emigration rate compared to other countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia

While Georgia had the third highest emigration rate among Caucasus and Central Asian countries, at 6.4% in 2015/16, it held the highest female emigration rate at 7.5% in the same year. The emigration rate among the low-educated (12.9%) is about twice the rate among the highly educated (6%, respectively), suggesting that emigration from Georgia to some OECD countries is not primarily composed of high-skilled workers but responds to the demand for lower-skilled labour. This pattern is particularly noticeable in the cases of Greece and Turkey.

Only 55% of working-age Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries were employed in 2015/2016

The employment rate of Georgian emigrants in the OECD area is 55%, 12 percentage points lower than that of the overall foreign-born population in OECD countries. This vulnerability among Georgian emigrants

in the labour market is reflected in high unemployment rates: one out of five active emigrants is unemployed, more than twice the rate for the foreign-born and the native-born populations in OECD countries. However, employment rates vary significantly across destination countries. While over 70% of Georgian emigrants were in employment in Israel, the United States and Italy, the rates were below 50% in Greece and France.

Georgian migrant women face more difficulties in accessing employment than men

Among Georgian emigrants in OECD countries, men present a higher employment rate than their female counterparts, although this gender gap is much narrower than that for the native-born population. In 2015/16, almost 60% of highly educated Georgian emigrants were employed in occupations that required a lower skill level.

Substantial over-qualification rates translate into a high concentration of Georgian emigrants in low-skilled occupations

In 2015/16, 59% of Georgian emigrants in the OECD area were employed as services and sales workers or held elementary occupations, mainly as personal care workers or cleaners and helpers. Whereas Georgian emigrants are more overrepresented in these occupations in Greece, Spain and Italy, approximately one out of three Georgian emigrants in France and Israel was employed in high-skilled jobs.

1 Recent trends in emigration from Georgia

This chapter examines recent trends in emigration from Georgia to the main OECD and non-OECD destination countries. As in many post-Soviet countries, the scale and nature of emigration from Georgia have been shaped by the complex economic and political transitions faced by Georgia in the 1990s resulting from the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Therefore, in order to better understand the recent evolution in emigration flows, this chapter first traces the historical context of emigration from Georgia since its independence. The chapter then examines recent emigration flows from Georgia to the main OECD destination countries and analyses the nature of these flows, using data on categories of residence permits issued to Georgian nationals. Finally, the last section examines emigration intentions among the Georgian population and the main determining factors of the desire to emigrate.

In Brief

Key findings

- Annual legal migration flows from Georgia to OECD countries have significantly increased since 2000 from about 1 400 persons to almost 12 300 in 2010 and to more than 30 000 in 2019.
- In 2019, Turkey and Germany attracted the largest flows of Georgian nationals in the OECD area, with more than 8 000 Georgian nationals migrating to Turkey and more than 7 000 to Germany that year. The next main OECD destination countries for Georgian nationals included Poland (4 200), Greece (3 000), and the United States (1 500).
- Women are overrepresented in recent migration flows of Georgian nationals to main OECD destination countries, with especially high shares of women in migration flows to Greece, Italy, and Turkey (respectively 85%, 73%, and 73% in 2019). However, the share of women in Poland is particularly low (17%).
- In 2019, the majority of first residence permits issued by European countries to Georgian nationals were issued for work reasons, while 25% were issued for humanitarian reasons and 13% for family reasons.
- The nature of migration flows from Georgia varies across destination countries. While Poland mostly issued seasonal work permits to Georgian nationals in 2019, Greece and Italy issued a substantial number of permits for humanitarian and family reasons.
- The number of annual asylum claims by Georgian nationals in European countries substantially increased following the 2017 authorisation to travel visa-free to the Schengen area, especially in France (8 000 in 2019).
- Close to one in five Georgians living in Georgia expressed the intention to emigrate permanently between 2010 and 2019, a slightly higher share than the average of selected neighbouring countries. However, these intentions rarely materialise in the short or medium-term: only 5% of Georgians intending to emigrate permanently consider doing so within a year.
- In 2019, about 50% of the Georgian population indicated an intention to emigrate temporarily, reflecting the importance of temporary labour migration flows from Georgia to countries such as Poland or Turkey.
- Emigration intentions are higher among young (30%) and unemployed individuals (26%). The high unemployment rates prevailing since 1991 have pushed Georgians to seek better employment situations abroad and partly drive emigration intentions among the Georgian population.

Historical context of Georgian emigration

Before Georgia's independence in 1991, emigration from the country beyond the USSR was heavily controlled by the regime and, therefore, extremely limited (OECD/CRRC - Georgia, 2017[1]). Following the collapse of the USSR, Georgia, as most former Soviet states, went through complex political and economic transitions. The resulting severe political instability facing the country in the 1990s triggered the first important emigration wave. In the early 1990s, conflicts and ethnic violence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia provoked the internal and international displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Therefore, between 1991 and 1995, emigration flows were mainly composed of refugees fleeing the conflicts. Furthermore, a substantial number of individuals from ethnic minorities left the country to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Greece and Israel. (Komakhia, 2008[2]).

Civil war, political instability, corruption and the difficult transition to a market economy caused a catastrophic economic crisis in Georgia in the early 1990s. GDP per capita plummeted (by 45% between 1991 and 1992), and inflation soared to unprecedented levels, making the collapse of Georgia's economy the most severe of all Caucasus and Central Asian countries. This economic situation prompted the second emigration wave. From the mid-1990s to 2004, high unemployment and inflation rates, as well as severe poverty, triggered massive economic permanent and temporary migration flows from Georgia (Makaryan and Chobanyan, 2014[3]). These flows, combined with low birth rates and the ageing of the population, played a major role in the decline of the Georgian population in the 1990s (Makaryan and Chobanyan, 2014[3]). As a result, emigration and especially that of young working-age Georgians became increasingly concerning to the Georgian Government.

Because of the geographical and linguistic proximity, thousands of Georgian emigrants migrated to the Russian Federation annually in the 1990s. However, the introduction of a visa regime in 2000 and the growing tensions between the two countries, heightened during the 2008 war, led to a significant decline in migration flows to this country in the 2000s and onwards.

A large number of Georgians also migrated to Greece. It is estimated that approximately 15% of Georgian emigrants went to Greece between the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s. These migrants had, for the most part, Greek origins (ICMPD, 2019[4]). Georgian emigrants also migrated to neighbouring countries such as Armenia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan. Germany, Turkey, the United States, and some West European countries also became, during the 2000s and 2010s, important destination countries for Georgian emigrants.

Following the Rose Revolution in November 2003, which led to the resignation of President Eduard Shevardnadze, the Georgian Government focused on economic policy and lifted visa requirements to attract investments. Foreign citizens from 98 countries can thereby stay in Georgia for 360 days without a visa. As a result, while remaining lower than migration outflows, immigration flows to Georgia increased and Georgia became a transit country. From 2004 onwards, the new government implemented many economic reforms, and Georgia entered a phase of economic development, with an average of a 9.6% GDP growth rate between 2003 and 2008 (Maroufof, 2013[5]).

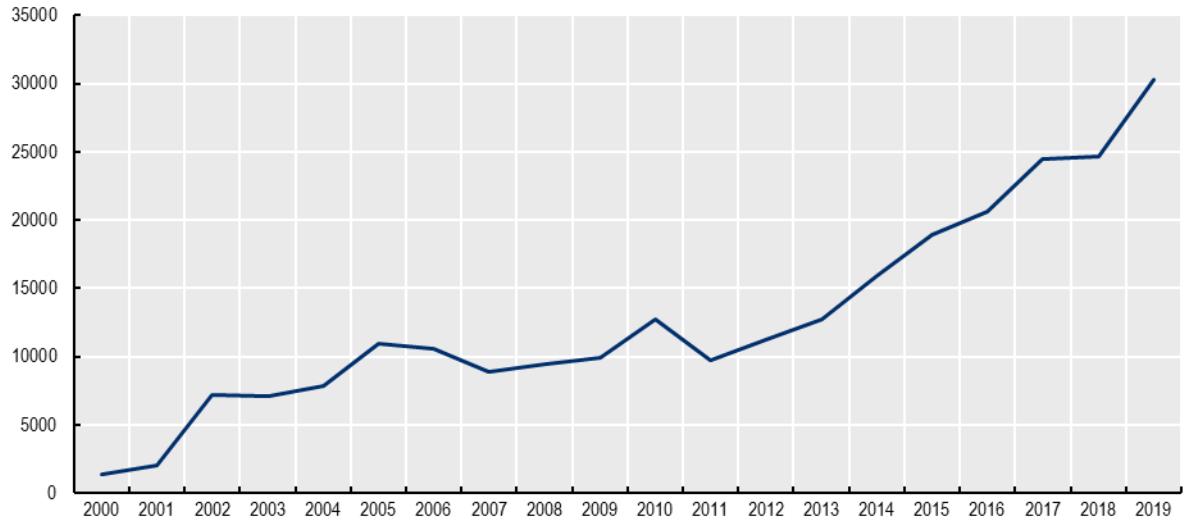
Recent migration flows to OECD countries

Flows from Georgia have considerably increased since 2000

According to the *OECD International Migration Database* (Annex A), annual legal migration flows from Georgia to OECD countries have increased since 2000 from about 1 400 persons to almost 12 300 in 2010 and to more than 30 000 in 2019 (Figure 1.1). Growth in migration flows to the OECD area was especially strong between 2000 and 2005 when flows increased almost eightfold (from 1 400 to about 11 000). Between 2011 and 2019, the number of Georgians migrating to OECD countries tripled, while flows fluctuated between 9 000 and 13 000 persons between 2005 and 2011.

The OECD International Migration Database data refer to the annual legal migration flows from Georgia to OECD countries. Although irregular migration flows from Georgia exist, it is challenging to measure them as no reliable and comparable data is available on irregular entries of foreign nationals in OECD countries. Migrants who legally entered destination countries and later become irregular can hardly be identified. It is, for example estimated that the introduction of the visa-free regime to the Schengen area for Georgian nationals in 2017 has led to an increase in irregular migration flows to European countries in the recent years (Medium Migration Profile, 2019[6]). Therefore, the data on actual migration flows to OECD countries and on the number of Georgian emigrants might be underestimated.

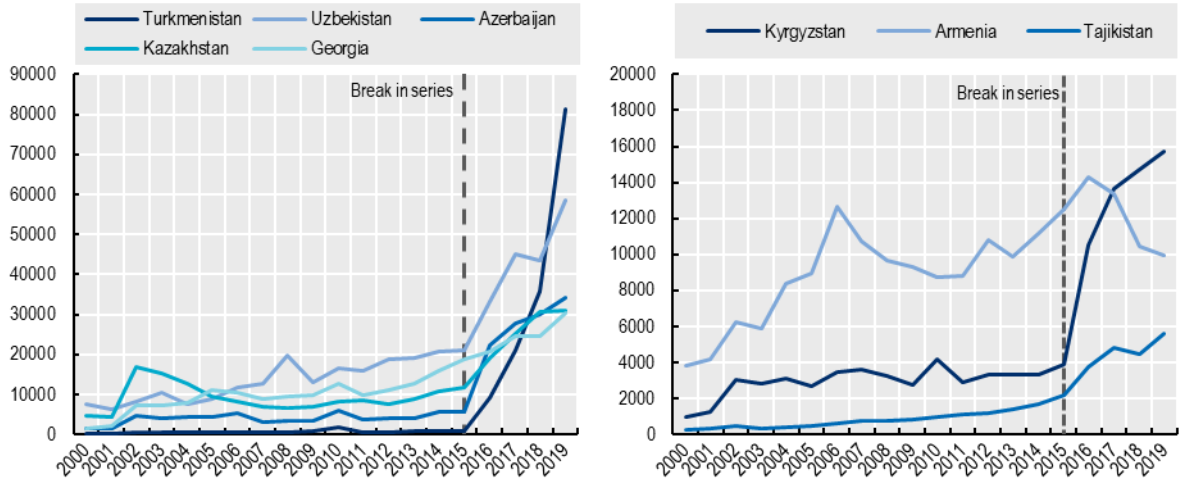
Figure 1.1. Migration flows of Georgian nationals to OECD countries, 2000-19



Note: All figures are obtained as the sum of standardised gross flows for countries where they are available.
Source: OECD International Migration Database (2021).

Figure 1.2 indicates a break in the data series in 2015 resulting from the unavailability of data on annual migration flows to Turkey before 2015 for all selected origin countries. Until 2015, migration flows from Georgia were higher than flows from Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia and Tajikistan (Figure 1.2). Out of the selected neighbouring countries, only the flows from Uzbekistan to OECD countries were higher than flows from Georgia during that time. From 2016 onwards, the data include the annual migration flows to Turkey, and therefore emigration flows from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to OECD countries exceeded flows from Georgia. Specifically, flows from Turkmenistan reached more than 80 000 people in 2019. Yet on average, over the past 20 years, Georgia has been the second-largest sending country to the OECD in terms of overall flows out of these selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Migration flows from Georgia and selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries to OECD countries, 2000-19



Note: The vertical line indicates a break in the series resulting from the missing data on annual migration flows to Turkey before 2015. Data on flows to Turkey are only available from 2016 to 2019.
Source: OECD International Migration Database (2021).

More than half of Georgia's recent migration flows to OECD countries are directed to Turkey and Germany

In 2019, Turkey and Germany attracted the largest flows of Georgian nationals in the OECD area, with more than 8 000 Georgian nationals emigrating to Turkey and more than 7 000 to Germany that year, representing together more than 50% of Georgian nationals migrating to OECD countries that year. (Figure 1.3). While migration flows from Georgia to Poland remained below 200 per year until 2014, they considerably increased from about 500 in 2015 to more than 4 200 in 2019, making Poland the third OECD destination country for Georgian nationals (Figure 1.3). This surge in migration flows to Poland is partly due to the introduction in January 2018 of a simplified procedure of access to the Polish labour market for Georgians willing to work temporarily in Poland (Radlińska, 2019[7]) and to the implementation of visa-free travel to the Schengen area for Georgian nationals in 2017. The fourth and fifth OECD destination countries were Greece (3 000) and the United States (1 500). The number of Georgian nationals emigrating to France and Italy was around 1 000 in 2019.

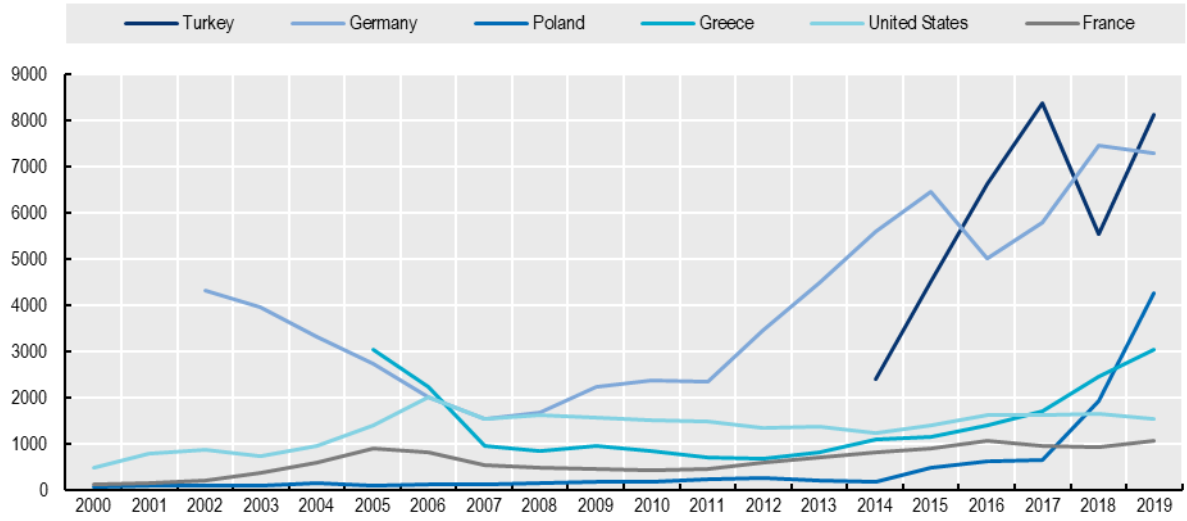
The lack of data on flows in the beginning of the 2000s prevents from painting a very clear and precise picture of the main OECD destination countries for Georgian nationals at that time. The data on migration flows to Tukey and Greece are for instance not available until 2010 and 2005 respectively. While Israel hosts a large number of Georgian emigrants (see Chapter 2), migration flows from Georgia to Israel almost exclusively took place directly after 1991. The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics provides an estimation of 1 400 Georgians migrating to Israel in 1990. That number increased to almost 3 800 in 1993. As a result, between 1990 and 2001, about 21 000 Georgian nationals migrated to Israel. Migration flows to Israel then decreased in the 2000s and only 200 Georgians arrived in this country in 2010.

Available data shows that the majority of Georgian nationals migrating to OECD countries until 2005 went to Germany. Greece was another important destination with 28% of Georgian nationals migrating to the OECD area went to Greece in 2005. However, the share of Georgian nationals migrating to these two countries gradually decreased, notably as migration flows to the United States, Spain, France and Italy increased. Especially, flows to Spain rose from about 400 in 2000 to more than 2 600 in 2007. This

diversification of destinations in the early 2000s can partly be explained by the progressive decline in migration flows to the Russian Federation.

After a decline in flows to Germany and Greece, and a relative stagnation of overall flows from Georgia to the OECD area, migration flows to Germany increased, while flows to the United States stagnated around 1 500 per year. Migration flows to Turkey increased, reaching 8 400 Georgians in 2017. The elimination of visa requirements for Georgian nationals migrating to Turkey in 2006 contributed to the increase in flows to Turkey (Figure 1.3). Between 2017 and 2018, following the introduction in March 2017 of visa-free travel to the Schengen area for Georgian citizens, migration flows to Poland and to Greece increased by almost 200% and 45% respectively. Flows from Georgia to Italy and to Germany increased by almost 30% that same year, while flows to Turkey decreased by 34% and flows to the United States remained the same.

Figure 1.3. Migration flows of Georgian nationals to the main OECD destination countries, 2000-19



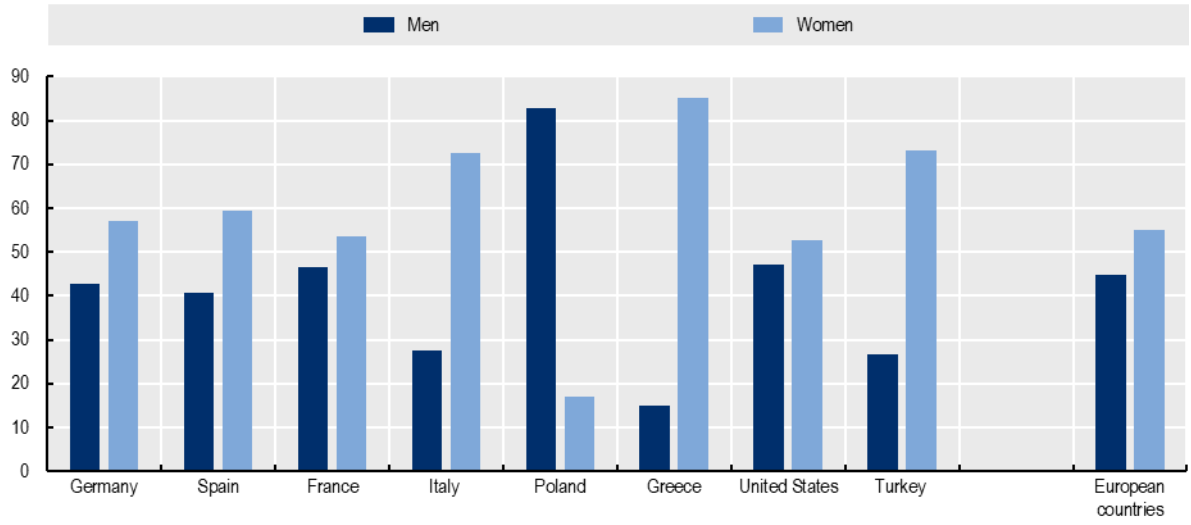
Note: Data on flows to Germany between 2000 and 2002, to Turkey between 2000 and 2013 and to Greece between 2000 and 2004 are not available. Inflows to Turkey in 2015 are based on an estimation from the Secretariat.
Source: OECD International Migration Database (2020). Data on annual inflows to Greece from 2012 to 2019 and flows to the United Kingdom come from Eurostat database ("First permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship", 2020). Data on flows to Turkey in 2014 come from GeoStat (2020).

Women are overrepresented in Georgian emigration flows to European countries

Women are overrepresented in recent emigration flows from Georgia to the main OECD destination countries. According to the data collected by Eurostat on the number of first permits delivered to Georgian nationals (Annex A), women accounted for 55% of all Georgian nationals who received a residence permit in the European Union in 2019 (Figure 1.4). This share was even higher in the early 2010s, when about 60% of residence permits were granted to women.

The gender composition of Georgian emigration flows varies across destination countries, with especially high shares of women in migration flows to, Greece, Italy, and Turkey (respectively 85%, 73%, and 73% in 2019). However, the share of women in migration flows to Poland is particularly low (17%). Although women remained overrepresented, the gender composition of flows to other OECD countries was somewhat more balanced: between 41% and 46% of Georgian nationals migrating to Germany, Spain, France, and the United States in 2019 were men (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4. Emigration flows from Georgia to the main OECD destination countries, by sex, 2019

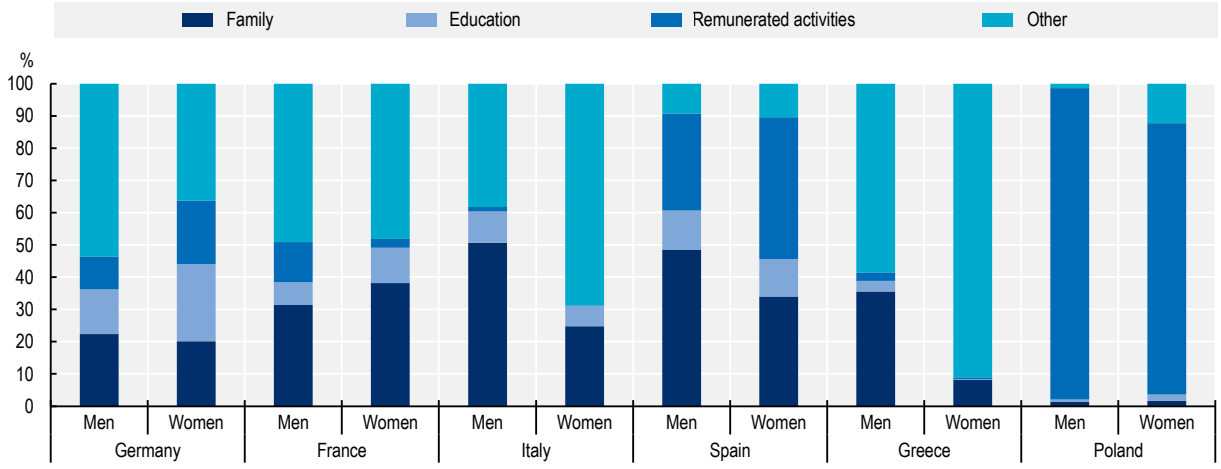


Note: The data for European countries correspond to the first residence permits issued to Georgian nationals for all durations and all reasons.
Source: For European countries: Eurostat, 2020 (database "First permits by reason, age, sex, and citizenship"). United States: OECD International Migration Database (2020). Turkey: Turkstat, 2019 ("Foreign population by sex, country of citizenship and the first year of residence in Turkey").

Although men were largely overrepresented in migration flows during the first emigration waves following Georgia's independence, a shift in the gender composition of Georgian emigrants occurred during the early 2000s. In the early 2000s, as Georgian emigrants started to diversify their destination countries, they increasingly turned to Europe and North America. More specifically, Georgian women increasingly migrated to these regions as "primary migrants" where they mainly worked as domestics (Zurabishvili, 2017[8]). This shift in the gendered migration pattern also occurred in the context of a global trend of feminisation of migration and the increasing demand for "female" occupations (Vanore and Siegel, 2015[9]). In that regard, the high shares of women in Georgian emigration flows to Greece, Italy or Turkey can be explained by the high demand for female migrant workers in sectors such as care services and domestic work. In contrast, migration flows to Poland are mostly characterised by temporary seasonal migration flows composed of men working in agriculture (Radlińska, 2019[7]).

The disaggregation of residence permits issued to Georgian nationals by grounds of admission suggests that in countries where they are overrepresented – such as Italy, Germany, and Spain – women are more likely to receive residence permits for work reasons. Furthermore, Figure 1.5 shows that in Greece, Spain, and Italy men are much more likely to be issued a permit for family reasons. In 2019, 36% of Georgian men in Greece and half of Georgian men in Italy were issued a permit for family reasons against 8% and 25% of women respectively. Women mostly received permits for humanitarian reasons. However, among Georgian nationals receiving permits for family reasons in European countries, more than half were women.

Figure 1.5. Residence permits delivered to Georgian nationals by the main European destination countries, by sex and reason, 2019



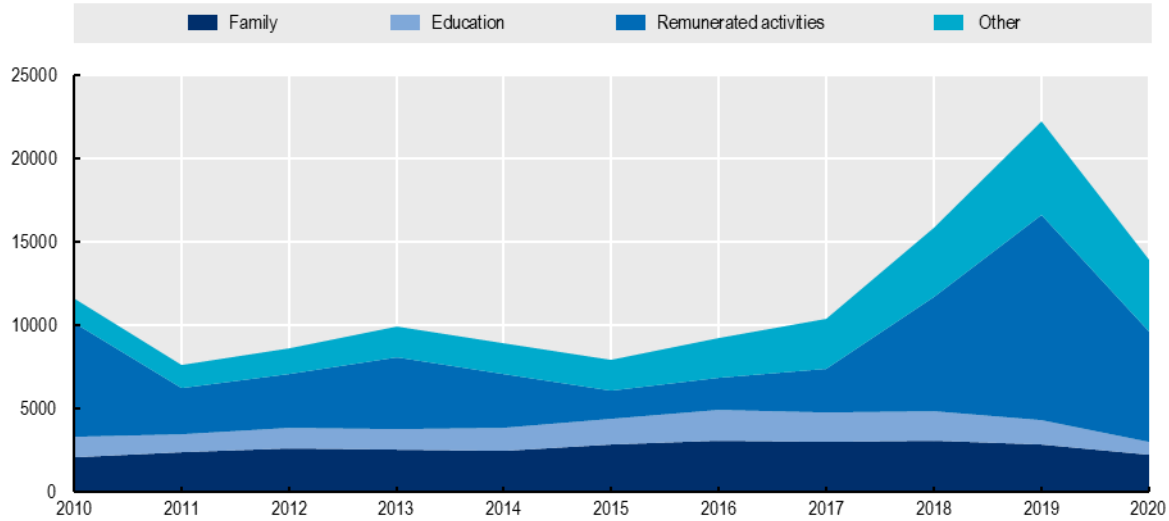
Source: Eurostat, 2020 (database "First permits by reason, age, sex, and citizenship").

Categories of residence permits issued to Georgian nationals by OECD countries

The majority of permits issued to Georgian nationals by European countries are issued for professional reasons

Over the past ten years, European countries have issued the majority of first residence permits to Georgian nationals for work reasons. In 2019, 55% of Georgian nationals received a permit for remunerated activities reasons, 25% received a permit for "other" reasons – a category including mostly permits for humanitarian reasons, 13% were issued a permit for family reasons and only 7% of them were granted a permit for educational reasons (Figure 1.6). This distribution evolved over time. In 2010, the share of permits issued for professional reasons was even higher (60%) and slowly declined, accounting for 20% of all permits in 2016 (from 6 900 permits for work reasons in 2010 to 1900 in 2016). This decline occurred alongside a rise in the number of permits issued for humanitarian and family reasons. The number of permits issued for humanitarian reasons continuously increased from about 1 400 in 2010 to a peak at 5 600 in 2019. The number of permits for family reasons grew by 46% between 2010 and 2016 representing more than one-third of all permits issued to Georgian citizens that year and slowly decreased until 2020. The share of permits delivered for education reasons remained relatively stable.

Figure 1.6. Residence permits issued by European countries to Georgian nationals by reason, 2010-20



Note: The data correspond to the first residence permits issued to Georgian nationals for all durations.
Source: Eurostat, 2020 (database "First permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship").

The nature of residence permits received by Georgian nationals varies significantly across destination countries (Figure 1.7). Flows from Georgia to Poland are almost exclusively issued for work reasons: the latter accounted for 78% of all permits issued to Georgian nationals in 2017 and this share reached 94% in 2020. As detailed above flows to Poland only started increasing in 2017 with the introduction of visa-free travel to the Schengen area for Georgian nationals. The number of permits issued by Poland to Georgian nationals significantly increased in 2018 and in 2019, following the simplification of the employment procedure for Georgian seasonal migrant workers in Poland in 2018 (Radlińska, 2019[7]). In 2018, more than 60% of permits issued to Georgian nationals for work reasons were seasonal workers' permits. These seasonal work permits were mostly issued in agriculture or services of board and accommodation (Radlińska, 2019[7]). Therefore, flows from Georgia to Poland are mainly characterised by temporary migration. In 2019, 56% of the permits issued by Poland to Georgian nationals were valid for three to five months and 20% for six to 11 months. Only 24% of permits were valid for more than 12 months.

Georgian seasonal temporary migration is also widespread in Turkey. If Georgian migrant women are mostly domestic workers in Turkey, most men are employed in tea and hazelnut plantations, in factories or in construction (OECD/CRRC - Georgia, 2017[1]).

In contrast, residence permits issued to Georgian nationals by Greece in the early 2010s were mostly for family reasons as they represented 74% of all permits issued by Greece in 2012. However, this share gradually decreased as the number of humanitarian permits increased. The latter grew from 300 in 2013 to more than 2 600 in 2019, accounting for 90% of all permits issued by Greece to Georgian nationals that year (Figure 1.7).

Regarding migration flows to Germany, the share of permits issued for work reasons progressively declined from 46% in 2010 to 30% in 2020, whereas the share of family permits remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 24 and 31% of all permits. Among the main European destination countries for Georgian emigrants, Germany is the country issuing the highest share of permits for education reasons: between 2010 and 2018, they accounted for 20 to 28% of all permits. In 2019, Germany granted about 1 000 authorisations to Georgian nationals for study, a number substantially higher than in any other

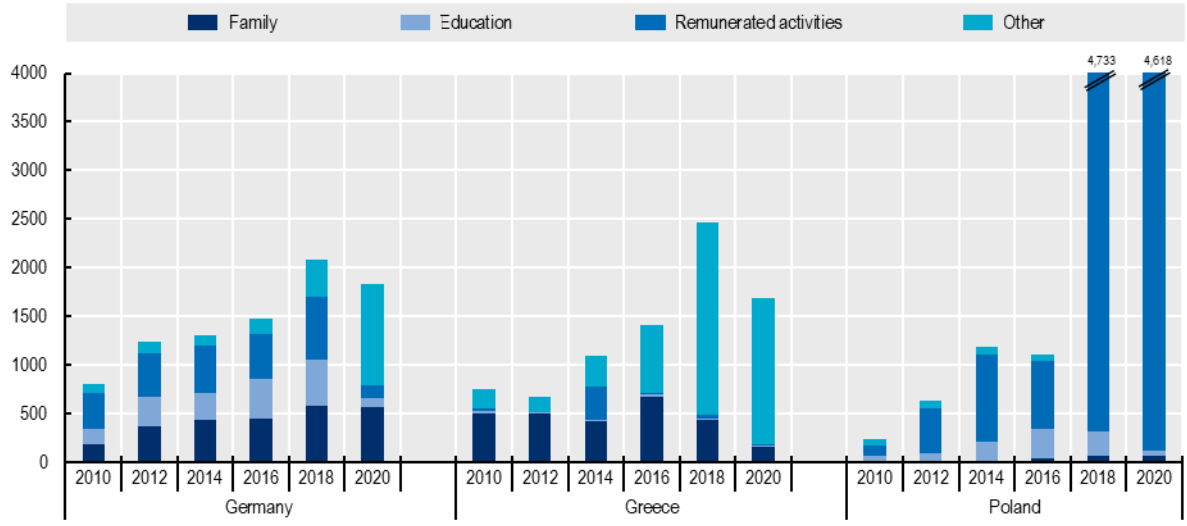
European country. A qualitative and quantitative survey suggests that the majority of Georgian emigrants residing in Germany had migrated for educational reasons. This partly stems from the fact that most students in Georgia learn German as a first or second language, thereby facilitating access to German higher education (ICMPD, 2014[10]).

Data provided by the United States Office of Immigration Statistics indicate that 58% of permanent residence permits for Georgian nationals in 2019 were issued for family reasons, the majority of them being issued to immediate relatives of the United States citizens. Furthermore, temporary residence permits granted to Georgian nationals were mostly student permits.

In the early 2010s, Georgian nationals migrating to Spain mostly received residence permits for work reasons. On average, more than 40% of those who migrated to Spain between 2010 and 2020 received professional residence permits and 28% were issued permits for family reasons.

In France, permits issued for humanitarian reasons account for the majority of permits received by Georgian nationals: almost 50% of all permits issued by France over the past ten years on average were issued for humanitarian reasons. In 2018 and 2019, the number of Georgian asylum applicants in France significantly increased, partly explaining the increase in the number of humanitarian permits.

Figure 1.7. Residence permits issued by Germany, Poland, and Greece to Georgian nationals by reason, 2010-20



Note: The data correspond to the first residence permits issued to Georgian nationals for all durations.
Source: Eurostat, 2020 (database "First permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship").

A recent surge in Georgian asylum applicants in France

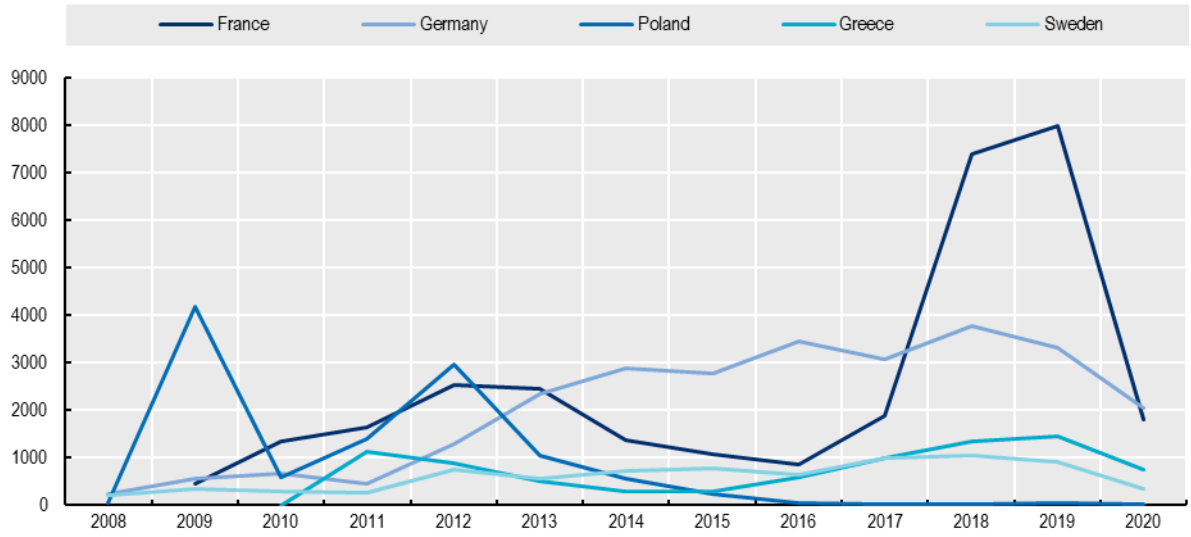
The number of Georgian first-time asylum applicants in European countries grew fourfold over the past decade, from 5 000 in 2010 to more than 20 000 in 2019. As illustrated in Figure 1.8, in the late 2000s, Georgian first-time asylum applicants in Poland significantly increased, from less than 100 in 2008 to about 4 200 in 2009 before progressively declining over time. Most of these Georgian citizens claiming asylum in Poland were reported to be Yezidi-Kurds, a minority who faced declining economic and social conditions in the 1990s, and increasingly migrated to the Russian Federation (ECMI, 2009[11]). However, the growing difficulty for Georgians to migrate to the Russian Federation in the late 2010s pushed them to choose European destinations. In 2009, Yezidi-Kurd Georgian migrants considered Poland as a transit country where asylum would later allow them to settle in Western European countries. Almost all asylum claims in

Poland have in fact been rejected every year since 2008. The observation that asylum was never granted to Georgians in Poland led to the decline in Georgian asylum claims in the country.

Later on, the number of first asylum claims by Georgian nationals in Germany also progressively increased from 700 in 2010 to 2 900 in 2014 and reached almost 3 800 in 2018. The number of asylum claims decreased in every country in 2020, a decline attributable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2017, the European Union allowed Georgian citizens to travel visa-free to the Schengen area, triggering a rise in legal emigration flows, but also in the number of Georgian asylum seekers in European countries. The number of first-time asylum applicants from Georgia in France soared from about 1 800 in 2017 to 7 400 in 2018 and to almost 8 000 in 2019 (Figure 1.8). Therefore, in 2019, almost 40% of Georgian first-time asylum applicants in Europe went to France.

Figure 1.8. First-time Georgian asylum applicants in main European destination countries, 2008-20



Source: Eurostat, 2021 (database "Asylum applicants by type of applicant, citizenship, age, and sex").

In 2019, the number of first-time asylum claims in France by Georgian nationals was the highest after Afghan and Albanian nationals. Comparatively, Georgians were the 11th largest first-time asylum applicants group in France in 2010. Studies show that recent Georgian asylum seekers' choices to emigrate to France or to Germany rather resulted from the wish to acquire better socio-economic conditions than from a situation of urgency (Chachava, 2020[12]). The surge in asylum claims in France, therefore, reflects Georgian migrants' will to seize the opportunity given by the visa liberalisation process. Indeed, many factors explain France's attractiveness for Georgian asylum seekers, including significant social networks, higher welfare benefits for asylum seekers, and easier access to information regarding asylum procedures (Chachava, 2020[13]). Yet, the unfoundedness of asylum claims can further explain the very low rates of positive asylum decisions by France and Germany: only 1% and 4% of asylum claims by Georgian nationals were accepted in France and Germany respectively in 2019. Overall, around 95% of first-time asylum claims by Georgian nationals in European countries have been rejected since 2010 according to the data collected by Eurostat on asylum decisions.

Overall, men are overrepresented among Georgian asylum seekers in Europe (60% in 2019). It is the case in most of the main European destination countries except in Italy and Greece. Until 2018, 70% of Georgian asylum seekers arriving in Greece were women. After 2018, women accounted for the same share as their male counterparts. Regarding Italy, a shift in the gender composition of Georgian asylum seekers occurred

in 2016 when the number of women asylum applicants became much higher than the number of men. In contrast, women accounted for 42% of Georgian asylum applicants in France, 33% in Germany, and 46% in Spain.

Migration flows from Georgia to selected non-OECD destination countries

While the Russian Federation has long been the main destination country of Georgian emigrants, flows from Georgia to this country have decreased over the past 20 years. This decline stems from the introduction of a visa regime for Georgian nationals and from the growing tensions between the two countries, heightened during the 2008 war.

Before November 2019, foreigners could only obtain permanent residence permits after holding a temporary residence permit in the Russian Federation for at least one year. Temporary residence permits are valid for up to three years. Therefore, the annual number of temporary residence permits, highlighted in Figure 1.9, reflects annual migration flows from Georgia. In 2011, almost 5 000 temporary residence permits were issued to Georgian citizens. This number declined by 35% to 3 000 in 2019 and to 1 400 in 2020, following the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, it is estimated that during the 1990s, around 20 000 Georgian citizens migrated to the Russian Federation each year (Medium Migration Profile, 2019[6]). Overall, flows declined by 14% between 2004 and 2019. If this decrease in migration flows results from the visa requirement and the conflicts between the two countries, it also stems from the decline in the attractiveness of the Russian Federation labour market.

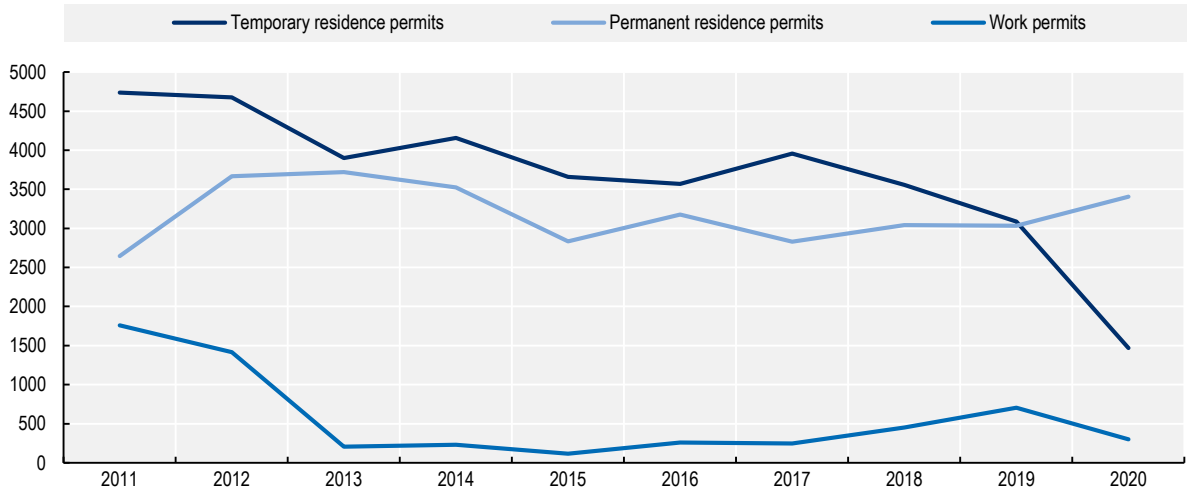
In addition to temporary residence permits – which allow foreign citizens to access the labour market – the Russian Federation issues work permits for a duration of up to three years. The number of work permits issued to Georgian citizens declined by 60% between 2011 and 2019 (from approximately 1 800 in 2011 to 700 in 2019) (Figure 1.9). This decline in labour migration flows has occurred along with an increase in Georgian migration to countries such as Turkey, where the access to the labour market is easier and more attractive.

Nonetheless, the comparison with the annual number of residence permits issued by OECD countries to Georgian nationals shows that the Russian Federation remains among the four main destination countries for Georgian nationals behind Turkey and Germany, and more recently behind Poland. The number of permanent residence permits issued to Georgian citizens have remained relatively stable over the past decade, fluctuating between 2 600 and 3 600 per year (Figure 1.9).

Over the past 20 years, the majority of residence permits issued to Georgian citizens by the Russian Federation have been issued for family reasons. The number of work permits issued to Georgians has been much lower than the number of residence permits since 2000 and has further fallen since 2013. In 2019, only 300 work permits were issued to Georgian nationals. The weight of labour migration in flows from Georgia is therefore relatively marginal. However, Georgian nationals holding a permit on family grounds of admission are also allowed to work in the country.

On average between 2014 and 2019,[1] 20% of temporary residence permits issued to Georgian citizens were based on quotas, which refers to mixed categories permits for individuals who do not have immediate relatives. Quota-based temporary residence are often delivered to long-term migrant workers who have indirect relatives in the Russian Federation. Quota-free residence permits are composed of permits related to family, repatriates, and other permits. On average between 2014 and 2019, 72% of residence permits issued to Georgian citizens in the Russian Federation were issued for family reasons. Out of about 3 500 temporary permits issued annually to Georgian citizens since 2014, 2 500 were issued for family reasons and about 2000 were issued to spouses of Russian citizens residing in the Russian Federation.

Figure 1.9. Annual number of temporary and permanent residence permits and work permits issued by the Russian Federation to Georgian citizens, 2011-20



Note: Before November 2019, Georgian citizens needed a temporary residence permit in order to apply for a permanent residence permit. From November 2019, Georgians can receive a permanent residence permit without already detaining a temporary residence permit. The data for 2021 only concerns the three first quarters. The number of work permits is not available for 2021.
Source: The Russian Federation's Federal Migration Service / Main directorate for migration (since 2016).

Emigration prospects among the Georgian population

Data on emigration intentions among the population born and living in Georgia provide a better understanding of the scope and drivers of Georgian emigration flows. Furthermore, emigration intentions can provide valuable insights into future trends in these flows. The Gallup World Poll (see Annex A) collects information on the emigration intentions of the population born and residing in Georgia aged 15 years or older. Data on the characteristics of these individuals make it possible to analyse correlations between intentions to leave the country and various socio-economic variables such as education level and employment status.

Close to one in five Georgians expresses the desire to emigrate

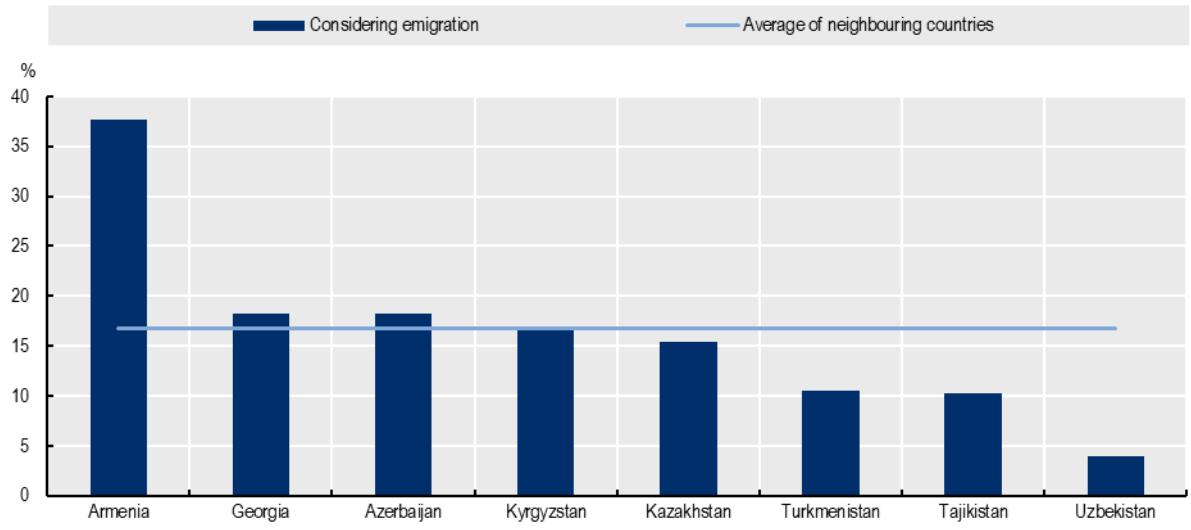
Emigration intentions in Georgia are slightly higher than the average of selected neighbouring countries. Between 2010 and 2019, 18% of persons living in Georgia aged 15 or older expressed the wish to emigrate. As shown in Figure 1.10, only Armenians expressed higher emigration intentions: 38% of the Armenian population indicated a wish to leave the country permanently. If the population of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan expressed similar emigration intentions as Georgians, intentions to migrate from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were much lower (respectively 11%, 10%, and 4% of the population). The reported favourite destinations of Georgians intending to migrate in 2019 were the United States (24%), Germany (16%) and France (9%). While Turkey and Greece rank among the first destination countries of Georgian nationals, they are relatively rarely designated as desired destinations (only 1% and 3% respectively). Therefore, these countries seem to represent more of a step in the migration experience rather than destinations where Georgian emigrants intend to settle permanently. Moreover, Georgian migrants in Turkey are typically temporary seasonal workers.

The Caucasus Barometer Survey (see Annex A) also provides information on the emigration intentions of individuals aged 18 or older living in Georgia. Additionally to the Gallup World Poll, this survey provides information on both the wish to emigrate permanently and temporarily. In 2019, 10% of Georgians reported wishing to emigrate permanently and about 50% of the population indicated wanting to leave the country

temporarily. This significant difference between the desires to leave permanently and temporarily notably reflects the importance of temporary labour migration flows from Georgia to countries such as Poland or Turkey.

Figure 1.10. Emigration intentions in Georgia and in selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries, 2010-19

Share of the population (aged 15 years and over) born and living in the country who consider emigrating permanently



Note: Considering emigration means answering "yes" to: "Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to live permanently in another country?"
Source: Gallup World Poll (2021).

However, these intentions rarely materialise in the short or medium-term. In the Gallup World Poll, the question "Do you plan to move permanently to another country in the next 12 months" allows assessing whether the desire to emigrate is likely to be translated into action within a defined period. The responses to this question reveal, for Georgia and neighbouring countries, a significant gap between the intention to emigrate and the probability of this intention materialising in the short term. While 18% of Georgians wish to emigrate, only 5% of them considered doing so within a year. This share is the lowest out of all selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries (9% on average). Although emigration intentions were especially high in Armenia (38%), only 13% of those wishing to emigrate considered leaving the country within 12 months.

Emigration intentions are higher among young and unemployed Georgians

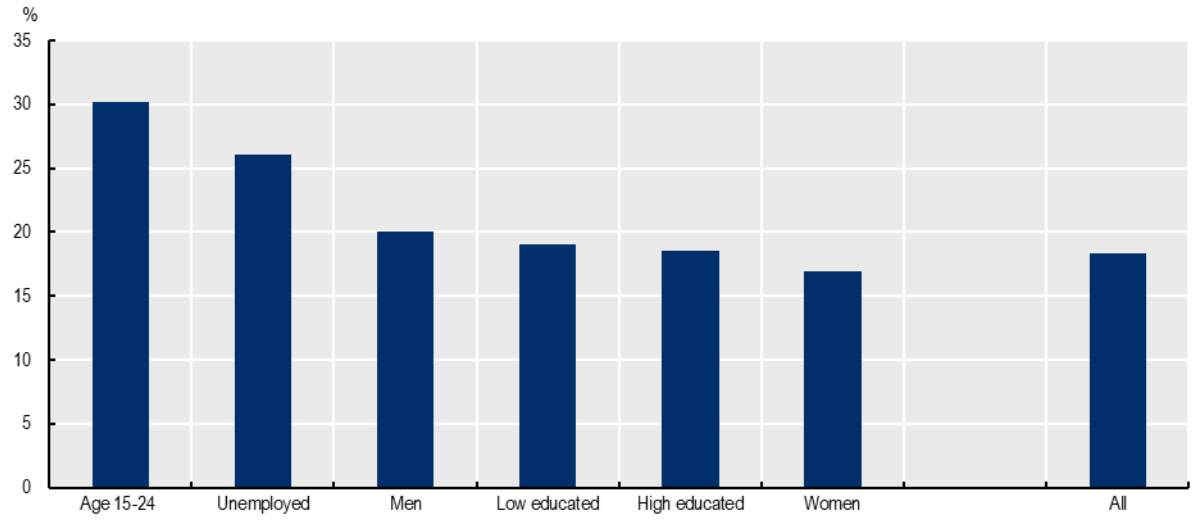
Emigration intentions can significantly vary according to socio-demographic characteristics such as age, education level, and labour market status. In Georgia and its neighbouring countries, emigration intentions are particularly high among young people (aged 15-24). As shown in Figure 1.11, 30% of Georgians aged 15-24 express the desire to emigrate. This share is 12 percentage points higher than among the overall population, which is the highest difference of all selected neighbouring countries. The Caucasus Barometer Survey data highlight the same trend regarding temporary migration intentions: almost 80% of Georgians aged 18-24 expressed the intention to temporarily leave the country, which is 20 percentage points higher than the overall population.

Emigration intentions also differ according to labour market status: 26% of self-reported unemployed individuals expressed the desire to leave the country (Figure 1.11) against 17% of employed individuals and 17% of individuals out of the workforce. These relatively high emigration intentions partly stem from the very high unemployment rates, especially among young and highly skilled people, that have been prevailing in Georgia since the fall of the USSR in 1991. If the country's economic situation largely improved in the 2000s, high unemployment and the mismatch between labour supply and demand have remained significant and have pushed young people to consider seeking a better employment situation abroad.

The Gallup World Poll data however does not reveal differences in emigration intentions across education levels. About 18% of highly educated people intend to emigrate and it is the case of 19% of people with low levels of education. Although women have been overrepresented in recent migration flows, men express slightly higher emigration intentions than women, though the difference is only 3 percentage points.

However, emigration intentions do not always match actual emigration decisions, especially for certain demographic groups. Employed or highly skilled individuals are more likely to have the necessary economic and social capital to emigrate than the young or unemployed, who may face higher difficulties making concrete plans to leave the country. The factors determining emigration intentions and the possibility of making concrete plans to emigrate are, however, numerous, linked to both structural and cyclical constraints, but also to individual characteristics, attitudes towards migration, family context, transnational networks, and perceived quality of life.

Figure 1.11. Emigration intentions among various groups in Georgia, 2010-19



Note: Low education refers to completed elementary education or less (up to eight years of basic education). A medium level of education is between some secondary education and up to three years of tertiary education (9 to 15 years of education). High education refers to at least four years of completed education beyond high school, or a four-year college degree.
Source: Gallup World Poll (2021).

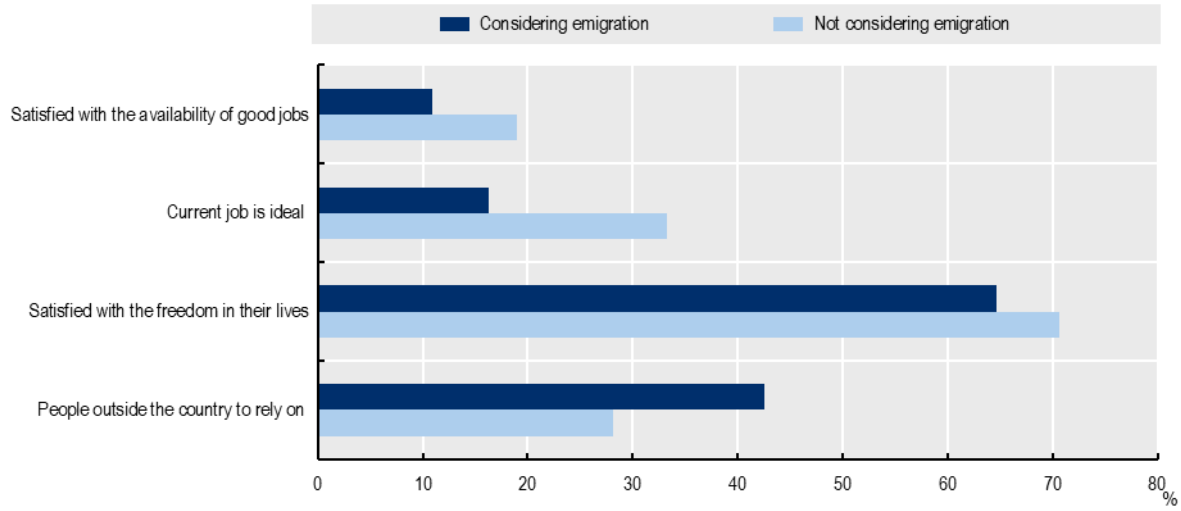
Economic and employment difficulties are the main drivers of emigration intentions in Georgia

Available data on the subjective well-being of Georgians wishing to emigrate shed light on the determinants of emigration intentions, and, indirectly, on the factors that drive actual migration flows. The unavailability of good jobs and the lack of satisfaction with the currently occupied job seem to be an issue faced by the entire Georgian population. Yet, only 10% of people considering emigration declared being satisfied with the availability of good jobs, compared to 20% of Georgians who did not wish to leave the country (Figure 1.12). Similarly, one-third of individuals who do not consider emigrating declared that their current job was ideal

whereas only 16% of Georgians intending to migrate agreed with that statement. Furthermore, although the share of those who report being satisfied with the freedom in their lives is relatively high, it is still lower for those intending to emigrate (64%) than for those who do not consider emigration (71%). In addition, those expressing a desire to emigrate are more likely to have a network of friends or family to rely on: 43% of them declared having people outside the country to rely on, against only 28% of those who do not wish to emigrate.

Thus, the difficulty experienced by Georgians with regard to the employment situation seems to be one of the main drivers of the intention to leave the country. The Caucasus Barometer Survey confirms these results: when asked what the most important issue facing Georgia is, almost half of Georgian respondents willing to emigrate mentioned unemployment, a share only slightly higher than among those who do not wish to emigrate (46%). Poverty is the second most mentioned issue: 21% of those who do not wish to emigrate consider poverty to be the most important issue in Georgia (against 17% of Georgians who wish to migrate). Other issues include unsolved territorial conflicts, inflation, and low quality of education.

Figure 1.12. Emigration intentions and opinions of persons born and living in Georgia, 2009-20



Note: Data on the satisfaction with the availability of good jobs and on the satisfaction with the current job are only available between 2010 and 2012.
Source: Gallup World Poll (2021).

Conclusion

The crises prompted by the complex economic and political transitions faced by Georgia in the 1990s after the collapse of the USSR provoked large emigration flows of Georgians fleeing the deteriorating economic situation. If Georgian nationals first mostly migrated to neighbouring countries, they diversified their destination countries in the 2000s and increasingly migrated to OECD countries. In recent years, the leading OECD destination countries of Georgian nationals have been, by far, Turkey and Germany, followed by Poland, Greece, and the United States. In parallel, flows to the Russian Federation have gradually declined. The majority of Georgian nationals migrating to European countries receive permits for work reasons. Furthermore, women are overrepresented in migration flows from Georgia to OECD countries, especially in Greece, Turkey, and Italy, where they mostly work in care services and domestic work. Emigration intentions are higher among the Georgian population than among most populations of selected neighbouring countries. If one in five Georgian expresses the desire to leave permanently the country, half of them indicate an intention to emigrate temporarily, reflecting the importance of temporary labour migration flows from Georgia. Emigration intentions are especially high among young and unemployed Georgians and mainly result from the difficult employment situation in the country.

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Note

[1] The disaggregation of the number of residence permits by grounds of admission is only available from 2014 to 2019.

2 Number of Georgian emigrants and their socio-demographic characteristics

This chapter examines the size of the Georgian diaspora in the main destination countries, as well as its overall evolution since 2000. It provides a socio-demographic analysis of the emigrant population, focusing on age and educational distribution, emphasising differences by sex and across destination countries. For the main destination countries, it provides a snapshot of the geographic distribution of emigrants, as well as information on the acquisition of nationality. The chapter also presents evidence on overall emigration rates of the Georgian population and its highly educated population towards OECD countries. The overall analysis systematically compares the Georgian diaspora with two reference groups: the foreign-born population living in the OECD area and the emigrant populations from seven selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

In Brief

- In 2020, close to 1 million Georgian emigrants were living abroad, which means that approximately one in five Georgians is an emigrant.
- Despite the decrease in flows since the early 2000s, the Georgian diaspora remains highly concentrated in the Russian Federation, where more than half of the emigrant population resides. The second destination country, Greece, hosts a much smaller population (10%).
- In 2020, approximately 300 000 Georgian emigrants were living in the OECD area. Greece, Israel, Turkey, and the United States host more than three-quarters of Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries.
- The number of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries more than doubled between 2000 and 2020. In absolute numbers, Greece led this increase, although the number of Georgian emigrants in the country has mostly stagnated since the 2008 global recession. Among the main destinations, Turkey registered the largest percentage increase, particularly after the elimination of the visa requirement in 2006.
- Half of the approximately 7 000 Georgian refugees live in France. The elimination of the visa requirement to enter the Schengen area in 2017 prompted an increase in the number of asylum seekers from Georgia, which practically doubled between 2017 and 2018.
- In 2019, 4 200 Georgian students were enrolled in a tertiary-level programme abroad. Eight in ten were studying in an OECD country and almost half in Germany alone. Turkey is gaining prominence as an educational destination.
- The Georgian diaspora in the OECD area is feminised: six in ten emigrants are women. The growing demand for female labour for domestic work and elder care in Europe and increased restrictions to emigrate to the Russian Federation, main destination for men, both account for this trend.
- Among the top five destinations, Turkey and Italy exhibit the greatest gender gaps with women accounting for more than 80% of Georgian emigrants in these countries. In the United States and Germany, the gender ratio is more balanced.
- Three-quarters of the Georgian emigrant population in OECD countries are of working age. Israel hosts a larger share of older Georgian emigrants, while Italy and Turkey host the largest proportion of working-age emigrants, and Germany, the largest proportion of Georgian families.
- Six out of ten Georgian emigrants arrived in the OECD area more than ten years ago, but Georgian immigration is still more recent than the overall immigration to OECD countries.
- While the educational level of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries has improved since 2000/01, it is still below the level of the Georgian population, which points to a negative self-selection in terms of educational attainment.
- In 2015/16, Georgian emigrants acquired the citizenship of their OECD host country at a higher rate than the average emigrant. Six out of ten Georgian emigrants hold the citizenship of their OECD country of residence.
- In 2015/16, Georgia had the highest female emigration rate among selected neighbouring countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia.
- In 2020, the Georgian diaspora sent almost USD 2 billion in remittances, accounting for 13% of Georgia's GDP. Between 2000 and 2020, the income of seasonal or short-term workers accounted for 46% of these flows.

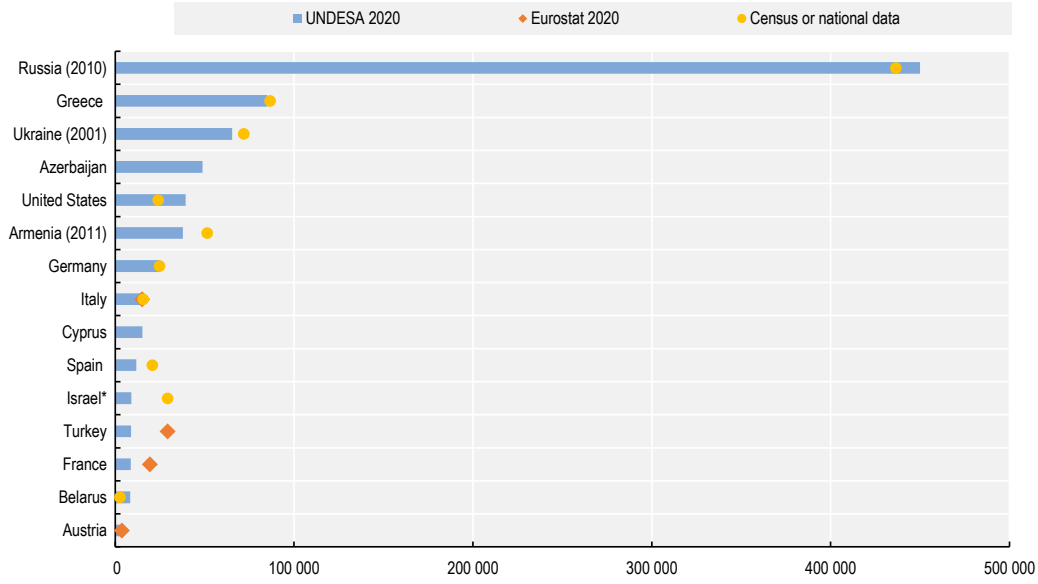
Recent trends in the number of Georgian emigrants

Close to 900 000 Georgian emigrants live abroad

According to United Nations estimates, approximately 860 000 Georgians individuals lived abroad in 2020, which represents 22% of Georgia's population (Figure 2.1). This diaspora is highly concentrated in Europe, which hosts 80% of the Georgian emigrant population. Asia and North America account for the remainder, with 15% and 5%, respectively.

According to UNDESA estimates, the Russian Federation remains the leading destination country, hosting more than half (52%) of all Georgian emigrants (450 000), despite the introduction of a visa for Georgian citizens in 2001 and the 2008 conflict (OECD/CRRC - Georgia, 2017[1]). Such geographic concentration is explained by pre-existing historical and economic ties, geographic and cultural proximity and knowledge of the language (European Training Foundation, 2013[2]). Greece is the second largest destination country, hosting 10% of Georgian emigrants, followed by Ukraine (8%), Azerbaijan (6%), and the United States (5%).

Figure 2.1. Number of Georgian emigrants in main destination countries, 2020 or latest year available



Note: Data from national statistical offices in destination countries come from census, registries or household surveys. Where data are prior to 2015, the year is shown in parentheses next to the country name. In Germany and Italy, the Georgian population is estimated by country of citizenship.

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, International Migrant Stock 2020; Armenia (2011 Census via IPUMS); Germany (2019 Central Registry for Foreigners); Greece (2011 Census via IPUMS); Italy (Eurostat 2018 data); Israel (2020 OECD Secretariat estimate); the Russian Federation (2010 Census); Spain (2020 Census data); Ukraine (2001 Census via IPUMS); the United States (American Community Survey pooled data for 2017 19).

Box 2.1. The concept of diaspora

This report specifically looks at people born in Georgia and living abroad, especially in OECD countries. In particular, questions related to the children of emigrants born in host countries are not addressed because data on this group are only available in some OECD countries. While it is true that the broader diaspora, including children of emigrants born in host countries, can significantly contribute to the economic and social development of the origin country, data limitations make it challenging to enumerate them consistently and obtain information about their socio-demographic characteristics across OECD countries.

Box 2.2. The Georgian diaspora in national statistics

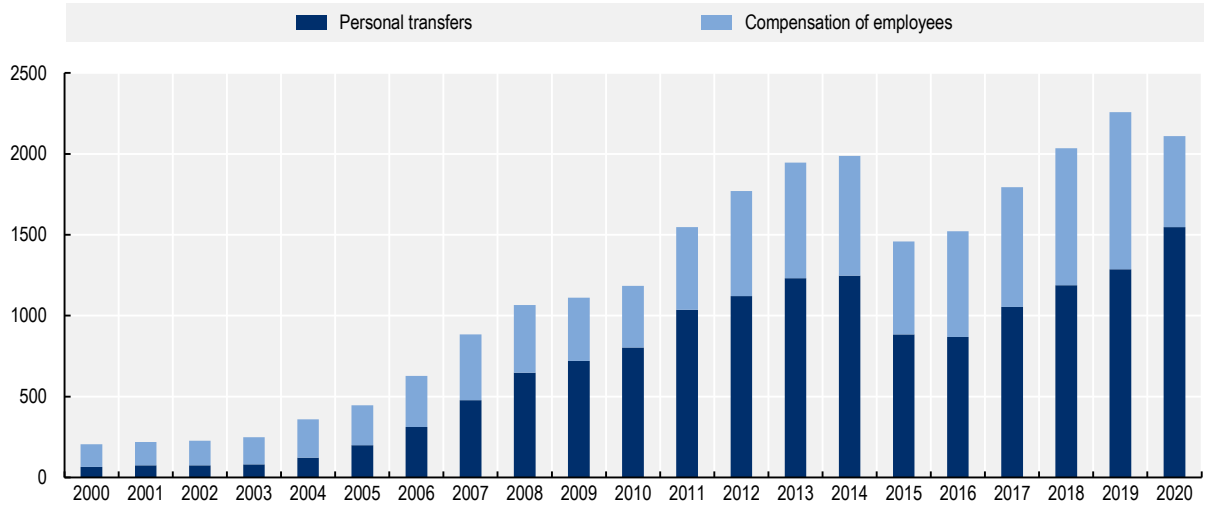
National data on Georgian emigration are problematic for several reasons. First, while Georgian citizens are required to obtain an emigration permit to leave the country permanently, many do not do so (Hakkert, 2017[3]). Further, it was not until 2012 that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began measuring net emigration through border crossings and length of stay, emigrants defined as individuals who had moved abroad for at least 6 months and one day.

In the 2014 Georgian Population and Housing Census, an emigrant is defined as a usual resident of Georgia who lives abroad permanently or temporarily since 1 January 2002, and who has been absent from Georgia for more than 12 months. Following this definition, the emigrant population was estimated at 89 000 (approximately 2% of the total population), lowering to 70 000 when considering only those with Georgian citizenship. As such, the figure significantly underestimates the Georgian emigrant population as it is based on information provided by household members living in Georgia, thus omitting emigrants who were living alone before leaving, as well as the departure of entire households. Further, due to its definition of emigrants the question effectively excludes those who emigrated before 2002. In fact, most people who could and wanted to emigrate from Georgia had done so by the early 2000s, after which emigration slowed down (Jones, 2013[4]).

In 2020, the Georgian diaspora sent almost USD 2 billion in remittances

Unsurprisingly, Georgia, a country with a small population of 3.7 million and significant levels of labour migration, is highly dependent on remittances with a ratio of remittances to GDP at 13.3% in 2020 (Figure 2.2). However, this ratio is almost on par with the average from the reference group (13.8%). The level of personal remittances to Georgia gradually increased between 2003 and 2014, when they amounted to approximately USD 2 billion. The 2015 decrease can be partially explained by sluggish macroeconomic conditions in the Russian Federation as well as the Eurozone debt crisis, which particularly affected Greece. Between 2000 and 2020, almost half (46%) of personal remittances were composed by the income of border, seasonal, and other short-term workers which are catalogued as employees' compensation.

Figure 2.2. Personal remittances sent to Georgia (USD million), 2000-20



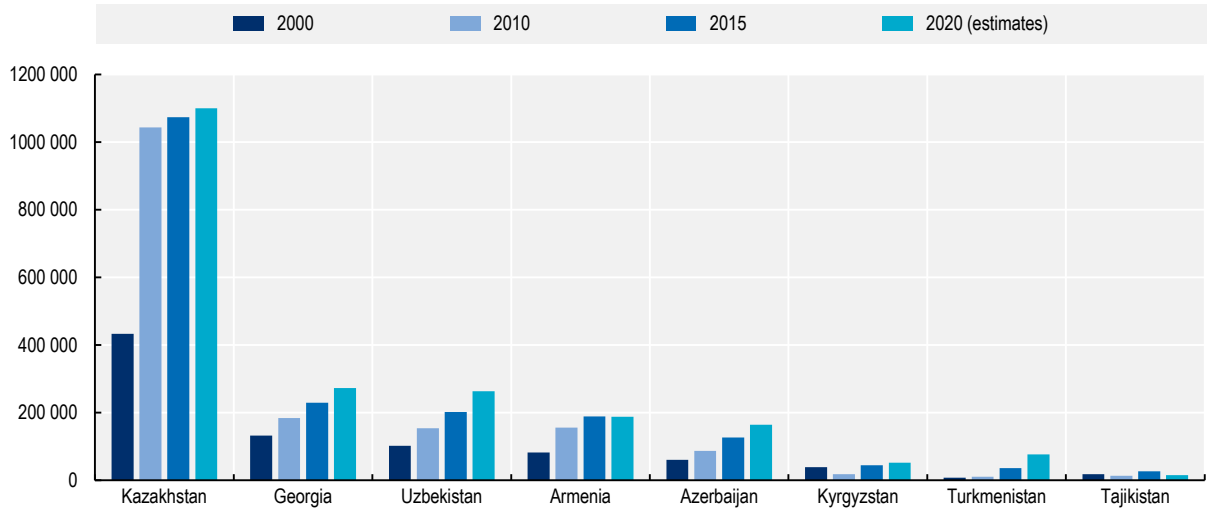
Note: Remittances include workers remittances and compensation of employees.
Source: IMF Balance of Payments, 2022.

Approximately 275 000 Georgian migrants live in OECD countries

According to the most recent estimates, approximately 275 000 Georgian migrants lived in OECD countries in 2020 (Figure 2.3). Among the selected reference group – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – Georgia's diaspora is the second largest in OECD countries, only after Kazakhstan's. The preponderance of the Kazakhstani and Georgian diaspora in the OECD area also reflects the importance of the Russian Federation as a destination for the other countries. In 2010, when data are available, approximately 70 and 75% of the Kazakhstani and Georgian emigrants resided in the Russian Federation, compared to 97% of the Tajikistani and Kyrgyzstani emigrants.

Between 2000 and 2020, the number of Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries increased twofold. In absolute terms, such growth (+ 141 000) ranks third among the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, below Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In percentage terms, however, Georgia ranks among the three lowest, only before Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Figure 2.3. Number of emigrants from Georgia and selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries living in OECD countries, 2000-20



Notes: Reference population includes all persons.
Source: Data for 2000, 2010 and 2015: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC). Data for 2020: OECD Secretariat estimates.

In the OECD area, Greece, Israel, Turkey and the United States account for three-quarters of the Georgian diaspora

In 2020, the Georgian diaspora in the OECD area was concentrated in Greece (34% of the emigrant population), Israel (14%), Turkey (12%), Germany (10%) and the United States (10%). These four countries account for more than three-quarters of the Georgian diaspora in the OECD area. Across the main destination countries, however, the Georgian migrant population has evolved differently since 2000.

Greece has been the leading destination in the OECD area since 2000. Georgian emigration responded to the demands of the Greek labour market, the transport infrastructure between the two countries, cultural and religious affinities (Christian Orthodox religion) and strong social networks that date back to the early 1990s (Maroufof, 2017[5]; Triandafyllidou, 2018[6]). Among the seven main destinations shown in Figure 2.4, between 2000 and 2020, the Georgian diaspora in Greece registered the third largest increase in absolute numbers (+22 000). In percentage terms, however, the increase is only the sixth highest (+36%). Moreover, this growth was mostly observed between 2000 and 2010, when the Georgian diaspora increased by 38%, after which it practically stagnated between 2010 and 2020. The latter tendency is linked to both a drop in new arrivals and an increase in return migration amidst a context of economic recession in the Greek labour market following the 2008 global recession and the 2015 Eurozone crisis (Maroufof, 2017[5]).

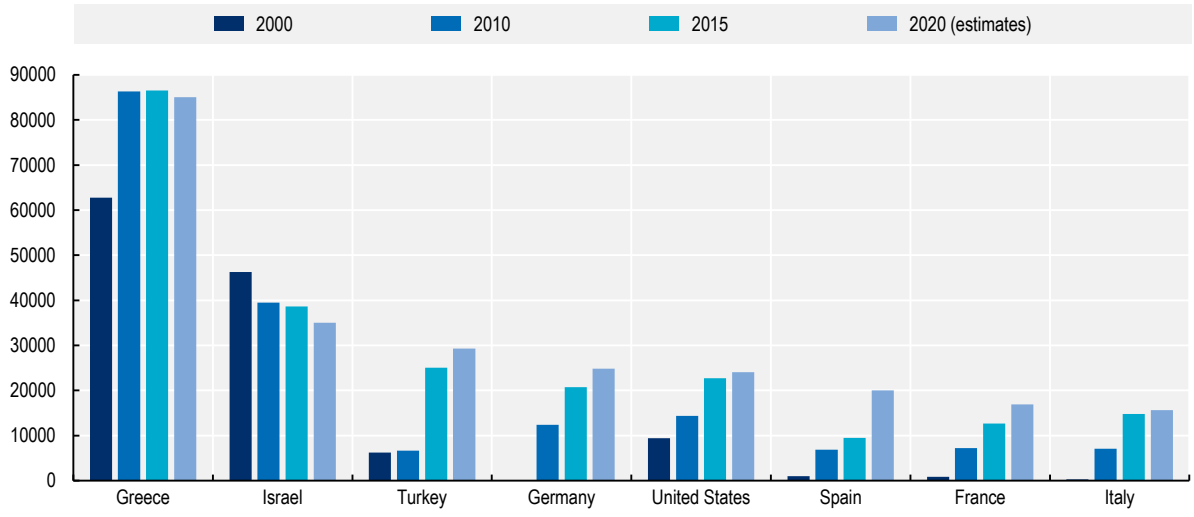
In Israel, the second destination country in the OECD area, the Georgian diaspora has gradually decreased between 2000 and 2020. Starting with a population of approximately 46 000 Georgian emigrants at the beginning of the century, there were approximately 35 000 by 2020 (-24%), a trend that is explained by an ageing population that arrived, in its majority, during the early 1990s as a result of the USSR's dissolution and repatriation programmes in Israel (Denisenko, 2020[7]).

Conversely, in Turkey, the size of the Georgian diaspora grew almost five-fold between 2000 and 2020, the third largest percentage increase among the main destination countries. While Turkey has been a popular destination for emigrants since Georgian independence in 1991 due to its geographical proximity, its attractiveness increased after the abolition of a visa requirement for Georgian citizens in 2006 (IOM,

2008[8]). Indeed, while the number of Georgian emigrants only grew by 6% between 2000 and 2010, it increased by 341% between 2010 and 2020.

In Germany, the fourth destination country, the lack of data provide an incomplete picture of the diaspora's evolution. Yet, the latter doubled between 2011 and 2020. In the United States, the number of Georgian emigrants more than doubled between 2000 and 2020. Italy, Spain and France saw the largest percentage increases, respectively, which can be explained by strong base effects. From less than 300 Georgian migrants in 2000, Italy now hosts 16 000. Similarly, in Spain and France, the Georgian diaspora grew from less than 1 000 in each country to almost 20 000 and 17 000 in 2020, respectively.

Figure 2.4. Evolution of the number of Georgian emigrants in main OECD destination countries, 2000-20



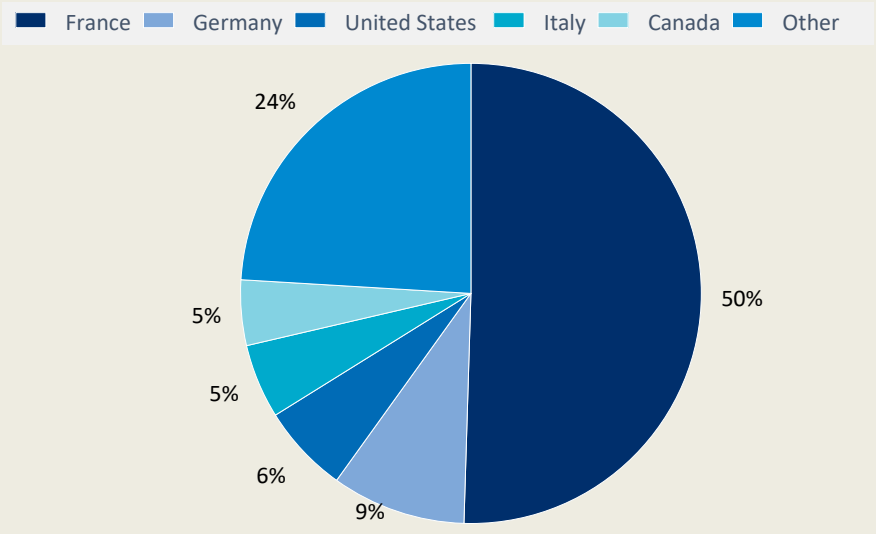
Note: Reference population includes all persons. In Germany, the Georgian population is estimated by country of citizenship.
Source: Data for 2000, 2010 and 2015: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC). Data for 2020: OECD Secretariat Estimates. Data for Germany: Database of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (2011, 2015 and 2020).

Of the total Georgian population residing abroad, approximately 7 300 are refugees (Box 2.1). Refugees are theoretically estimated as part of the foreign-born population in their respective host countries, but in practice, this depends on data sources and host country practices.

Box 2.3. Half of Georgian refugees worldwide reside in France

In 2020, there were 7 346 recognised Georgian refugees worldwide, half of which reside in France, which has been a leading destination country since 2011. Germany and the United States host an additional 9 and 6%, respectively. While the number of Georgian refugees has been relatively stable since 2013 (between 6 000 and 70 000), the number of asylum seekers has registered important variations. As detailed in Chapter 1 of this report, in 2017, the European Commission allowed Georgian citizens to travel without visa to the Schengen area. This policy change prompted an increase in the number of Georgian asylum seekers: between 2017 and 2018, asylum application from Georgia in the European Union almost doubled (+88%) (Eurostat, 2020[9]) and peaked at approximately 21 000 in 2019. Overall, admission rates in the European Union are low: between 2011 and 2020, on average, 95% of asylum cases from Georgian citizens were rejected in first instance.

Figure 2.5. Distribution of Georgian refugees in main destination countries, 2020



Source: UNHCR (2020), UNHCR's Refugee Population Statistics Database (https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/).

Eight in ten Georgian international students reside in OECD countries, among which half are in Germany

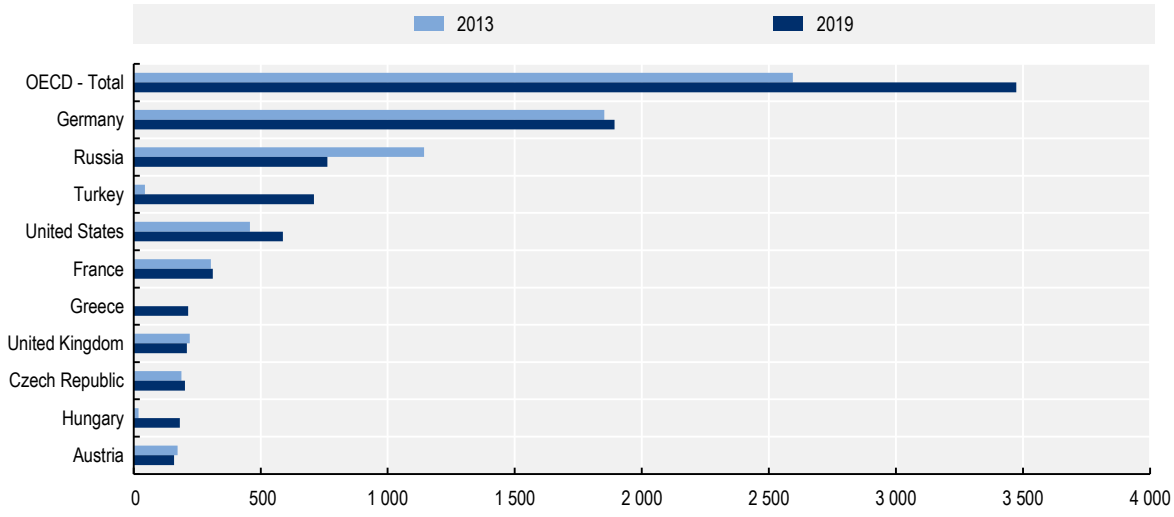
International students comprise another specific category of Georgian emigrants. After the 2003 Rose Revolution, Georgia pushed for improvements in higher education. Among other measures, the new administration promoted greater exchanges for faculty and students, particularly to European and American institutions (Campbell, 2016[10]). An additional driver of student mobility from Georgia – and former Soviet Republics more generally – was the adhesion to the European Higher Education Area in 2005, a set of agreements and commitments that allow national education systems to be more compatible and strengthen their quality assurance mechanisms (European Commission, 2020[11])

In 2019, approximately 4 200 students from Georgia enrolled in a tertiary-level institution abroad, which represents 3% of all tertiary-level enrolments in Georgia. Among Georgian international students, eight in ten were studying in an OECD country (Figure 2.6). Between 2013 and 2019, the population of Georgian international students gained approximately 500 students, an increase of 13%. In 2019, among the

selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, Georgia was the fifth most important origin of international students in the OECD area (5% of the total), with Azerbaijan leading and accounting for a third of the total.

Germany hosted the largest number of Georgian students in 2019, accounting for almost half (45%) of the total, followed by the Russian Federation (18%) and Turkey (17%). While the number of Georgian students in Germany has remained relatively stable between 2013 and 2019 (1 800 on average), it has varied considerably in the second and third leading destinations: in the Russian Federation, the population of Georgian students decreased by 33% since 2013, while in Turkey it grew from 45 to over 700 students in the same period. Even when considering the strong base effect for Turkey, the country has become an attractive destination for Georgian students in recent years.

Figure 2.6. Main destination countries for international students from Georgia, 2013 and 2019



Note: Enrolled Georgian students (who are not citizens of the destination country) in a tertiary education programme.
Source: OECD/Eurostat/UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021), *Education at a Glance Database.*

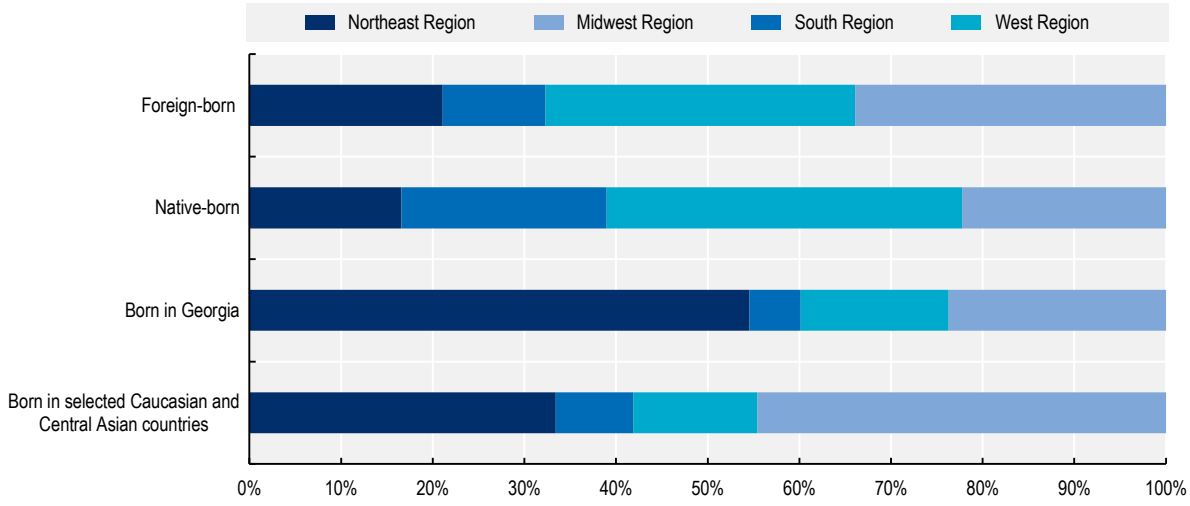
Regional distribution of Georgian emigrants in selected destination countries

National data sources make it possible to study the location of Georgian emigrants in certain main destination countries and to map their regional distribution. In the United States, of the 24 000 Georgian migrants that reside there, more than half (55%) is settled in the Northeast region and particularly in the states of New York (37% of all Georgian emigrants), New Jersey (9%) and Pennsylvania (5%).

In Germany, more than half (54%) of Georgian emigrants are concentrated in three federal states: North-Rhine Westphalia (22% of total Georgian population), Baden-Württemberg (16%) and Bayern (15%). Moreover, the majority resides in big cities such as Berlin (9% of the total), Munich (6%), Hannover (3%) and Hamburg (3%). This geographical distribution around big urban areas is explained by the availability of educational institutions, employment opportunities and migrant networks (ICMPD, 2014[12]).

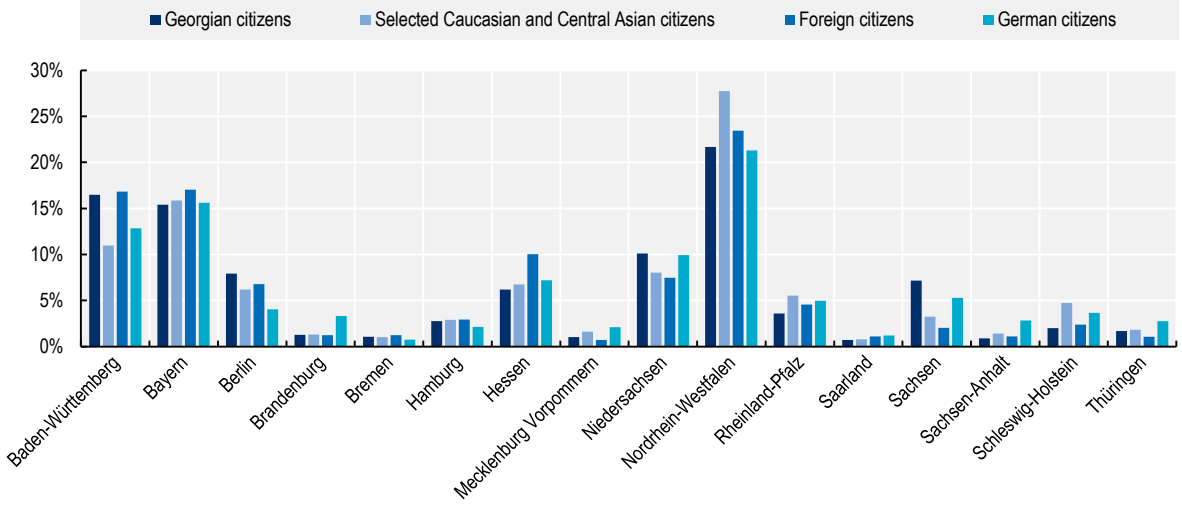
In Italy, more than half of Georgian migrants are concentrated in three regions: Puglia (22%), Umbria (21%) and Toscana (13%). According to surveys among returnees, the presence of social networks in Italy largely influences the settlement patterns of Georgian migrants, leading to concentration in destinations that are not necessarily optimal in terms of job opportunities, income level and migration policies (Badurashvili, 2012[13])

Figure 2.7. Regional distribution of Georgian emigrants in the United States, 2017-19



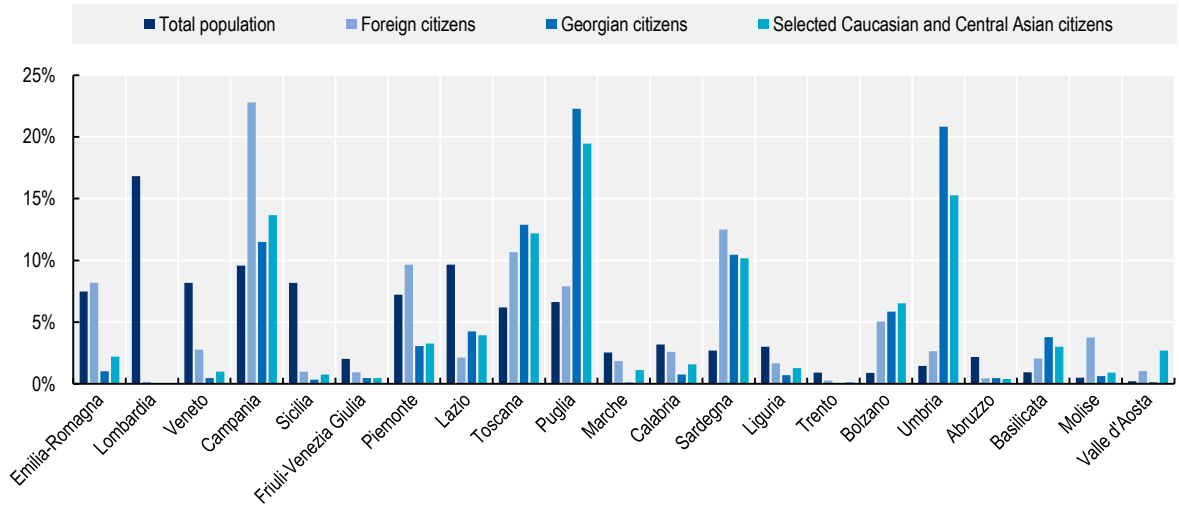
Note: The category of Central and Caucasian countries includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and the category of USSR, not specified.
Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; pooled data from 2017, 2018, 2019.

Figure 2.8. Regional distribution of Georgian emigrants in Germany, by citizenship, 2020



Note: Data by country of birth are not available. Foreigners include individuals with a foreign citizenship, stateless persons and those with "uncertain" citizenship.
Source: Germany's Federal Statistical Office (Destatis), 2020.

Figure 2.9. Regional distribution of Georgian emigrants in Italy, by citizenship, 2020



Note: The foreign population is determined by country of citizenship in Italian census data.
Source: Istat, 2020.

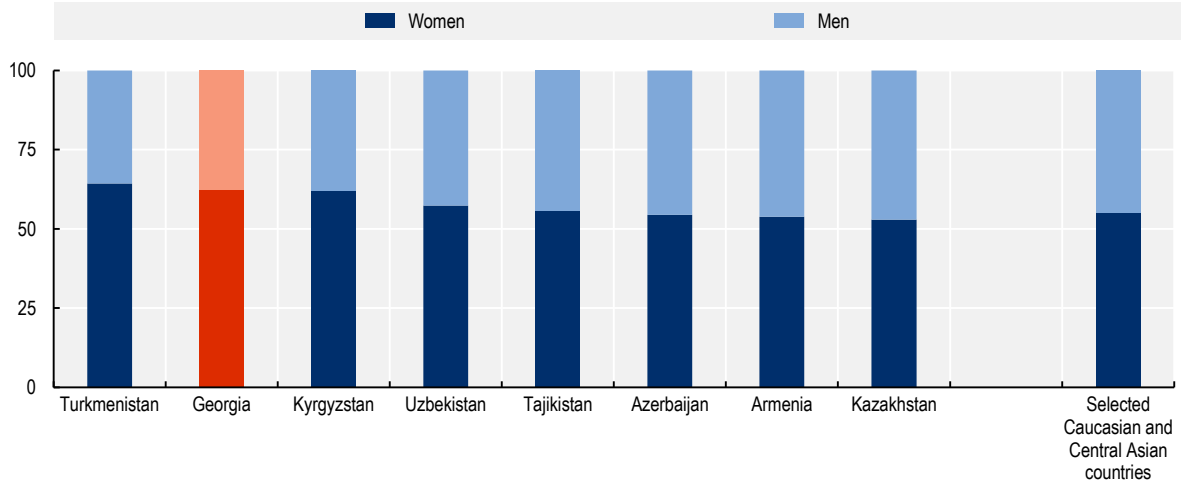
Demographic composition of the Georgian diaspora

In 2015/16, six in ten Georgian migrants living in an OECD country were women

In 2015/16, 62% of Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries were women. Georgia is the second most feminised diaspora among the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, and ranks above the group average of 55% (Figure 2.10). The share of women in the emigrant populations of these eight countries is also slightly higher than the share of women among the foreign-born population (51%). Moreover, the share of Georgian emigrant women increased by 15% since 2000, the third-largest percentage increase among the reference group.

A combination of push and pull factors account for the feminisation of the Georgian diaspora. Among the former, employment rates of women across the former Soviet space plummeted since the transition to market economies, despite Soviet-era policies that promoted the participation of women both in higher education and labour markets (Vanore, 2015[14])). Among the pull factors, the growing demand for female labour in the domestic and elder care markets increased opportunities for women (Vanore, 2015[14]; Trouth Hoffman, 2012[15]). Simultaneously, opportunities for labour migration in the Russian Federation, which used to be the traditional destination, became more limited for men. Indeed, 2010 data show that the Georgian diaspora residing in this country is more gender balanced (50% of the emigrant population is composed by women).

Figure 2.10. Share of women in the emigrant population from Georgia and selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries living in OECD countries, 2015/16



Note: Reference population includes all persons.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

While women account for the majority of the emigrant population in the OECD area, its distribution varies significantly by country of destination (Figure 2.12). Among the top five destinations, Turkey and Italy exhibit the greatest gender gaps, with women accounting for 84% and 80% of the diaspora, respectively, followed by Greece and Israel (61 and 58%, respectively). In the United States and Germany, the gender ratio is more balanced (52 and 57% of the migrant population is composed by women, respectively).

Overall, destinations outside the Caucasian and Central Asian countries are more attractive to women migrants due to the widespread availability of domestic and service jobs (Trouth Hoffman, 2014[16]). Moreover, while informal job networks for migrants are highly gendered, they are particularly so in European destinations such as Italy and Greece (Ferry, 2013[17]). In Turkey and Greece, Georgian women migrants are in high demand as domestic workers, caregivers, babysitters, janitors and waiters (ICMPD, 2014[12]). Similarly, in Spain, qualitative data suggests that Georgian women are employed mostly in the domestic sector as cleaners, housekeepers, nannies and caregivers (ICMPD, 2019[18]). Finally, the salience of Turkey as a destination for Georgian women migrants is also explained by the geographical proximity and low travel costs, which allow women migrants to return to Georgia on a regular basis and, in turn, permits them to maintain their family roles and control the use of remittances (Ferry, 2013[17]).

Eight in ten Georgian migrants living in OECD countries are of working age

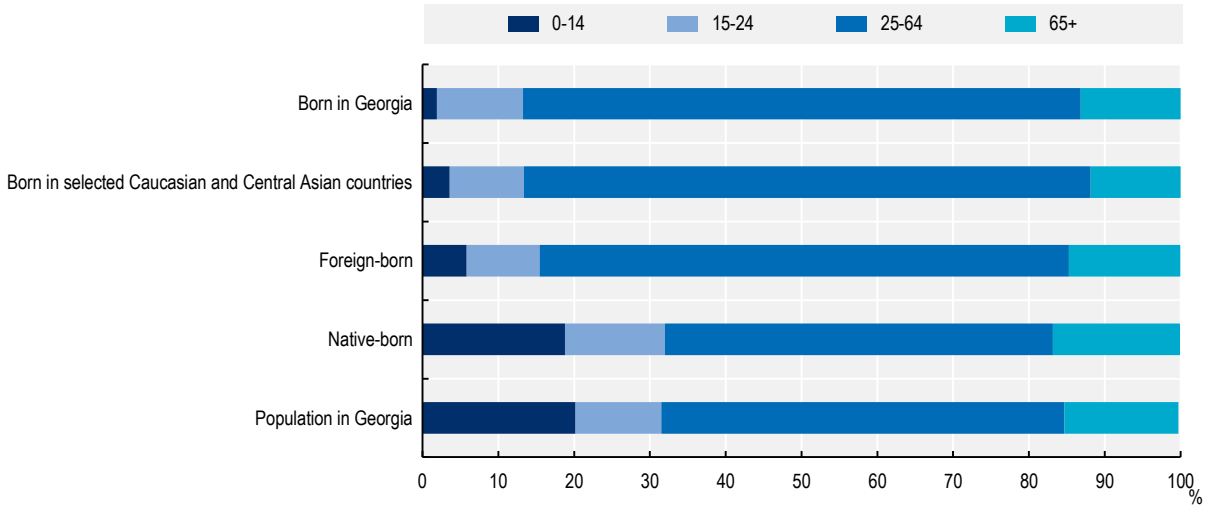
The Georgian diaspora living in OECD countries is primarily of working age: 83% of its emigrants were between 15 and 64 years old in 2015/16, similar to that of the Caucasian and Central Asian countries selected for comparison. Among these countries, 85% of emigrants belong to the same age group (Figure 2.11). The predominance of working age individuals in the Georgian diaspora is more significant than among the foreign-born and native populations of OECD countries (+4 and +19 percentage points, respectively). This positive self-selection among Georgian individuals in working age also means that the share of Georgian emigrants younger than 15 and above 64 is disproportionately low.

The population younger than 15 accounts for only 2% of the Georgian diaspora in OECD countries, a lower share than among both the foreign-born (6%) and native (19%) populations. Similarly, individuals older than 64 represent 13% of the Georgian diaspora, compared to 17 and 15% of the native and foreign-born populations, respectively.

Moreover, the age distribution of the Georgian diaspora highly contrasts with the population of Georgia and, again, points to a positive self-selection among those in conditions to work: only half (53%) of Georgians are of working age, compared to three-quarters (74%) of its emigrants. Similarly, 20% of the Georgian population is less than 15 years old, compared to 2% of the population that migrates to an OECD country.

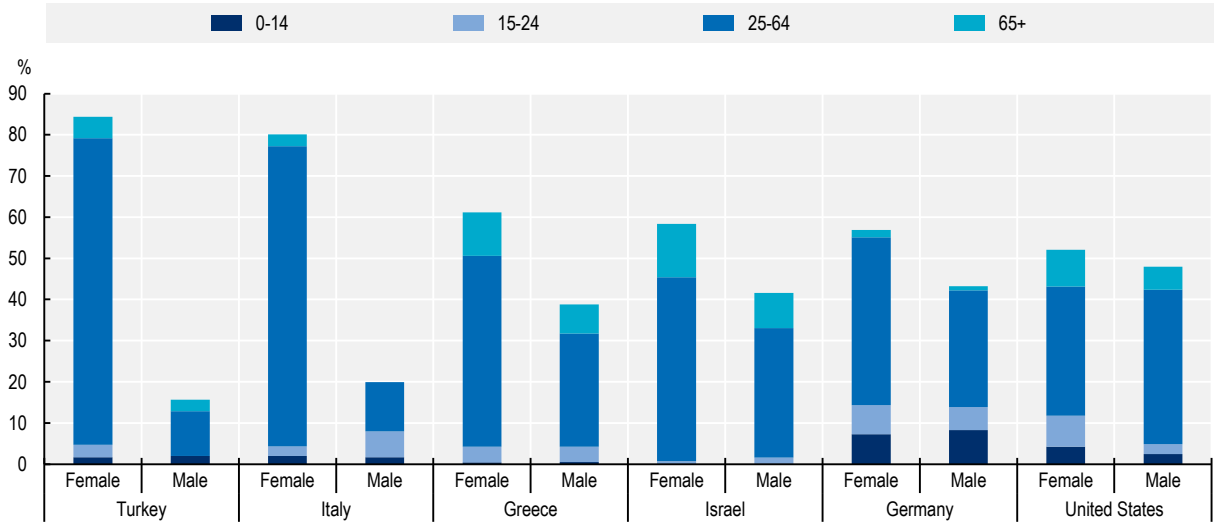
The age distribution of the Georgian diaspora also varies significantly by country of destination (Figure 2.12). The Georgian diaspora in Israel is older than in the rest of the main destination countries: the share of people over 64 years of age is 22%, compared to 3% in Italy. Conversely, Italy and Turkey host the largest proportions of Georgian migrants of working age (85% of the total in both countries). Germany accounts for the largest proportion of children: the share of migrants under 15 years of age is 15%, reflecting the preponderance of permanent family emigration. Finally, the United States is the only country, among the main destinations, where Georgian men represent a larger proportion of the working age population (37% versus 31% of women).

Figure 2.11. Distribution of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries by age groups, 2015/16



Note: Born in Georgia: individuals born in Georgia living in OECD countries in 2015/16. Born in selected Caucasian and Central Asian republics: individuals born in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan living in OECD countries in 2015/16. Foreign-born: all immigrants living in OECD countries in 2015/16. Native born: individuals born in an OECD country and living in their country of birth in 2015/16. Population in Georgia: individuals living in Georgia in 2015/16.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16; Population in Georgia: UNDESA World Population Prospects 2019 (2015 estimates).

Figure 2.12 Distribution of Georgian emigrants in selected OECD countries by age and sex, 2015/16

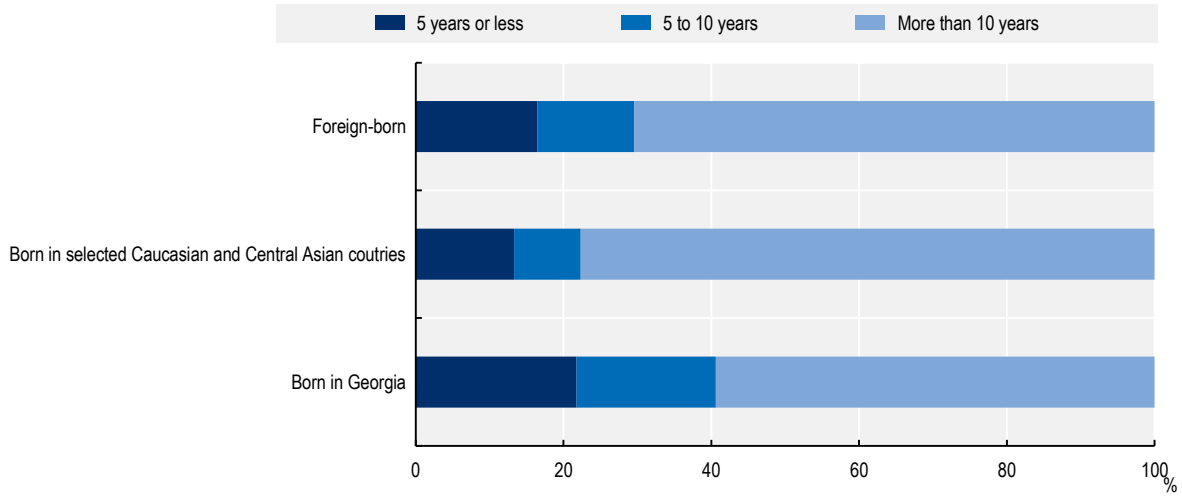


Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16; Germany: 2019 data from Germany's Federal Statistical Office (Destatis).

One out of five Georgian emigrants recently arrived in their host country

Emigrants who arrived in their respective destination country within the past five years can be considered recent emigrants. According to 2015/16 data, 22% of Georgian emigrants in the OECD area are recent migrants, while approximately 60% are settled migrants (arrived in the country more than ten years ago) (Figure 2.13). Compared to other diasporas in OECD countries, Georgia's is less mature on average – especially compared to the emigrant populations from other Caucasian and Central Asian countries, suggesting that temporary labour migration among individuals of working-age is far more widespread in Georgia (Barbone, Bonch-Osmolovskiy and Luecke, 2013[19]).

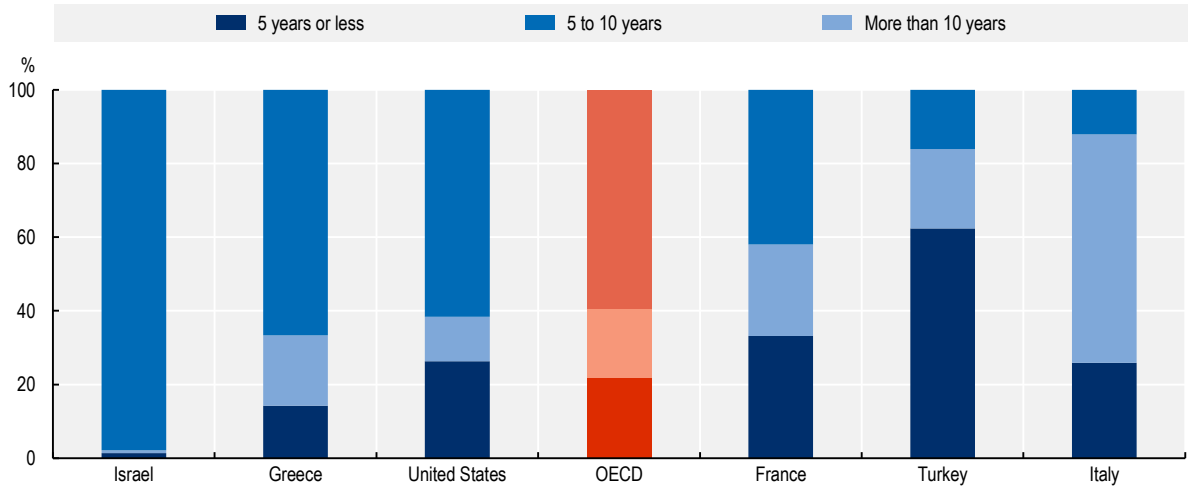
Figure 2.13. Distribution of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries by duration of stay, 2015/16



Note: Reference population includes all persons.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

There are also differences in the duration of stay among Georgian emigrants by country of destination (Figure 2.14). Among the main OECD destination countries – except for Germany where data is not available – Israel hosts the diaspora with the highest share of settled emigrants: 98% of the Georgian emigrant population arrived more than ten years ago, well above the OECD average of 69%. Greece and the United States are other destinations with a mature diaspora; more than half (67 and 62%, respectively) of Georgian migrants can be considered settled migrants. In contrast, a significant share of Georgian emigrants living in Turkey (83%) and Italy (88%) arrived to those destinations less than ten years ago. Of particular salience is the fact that more than 60% of Georgian emigrants in Turkey – presumably circular migrants working in the agricultural sector – are recent migrants (Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.14. Distribution of Georgian emigrants by duration of stay in main OECD destination countries, 2015/16



Note: Reference population includes all persons.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

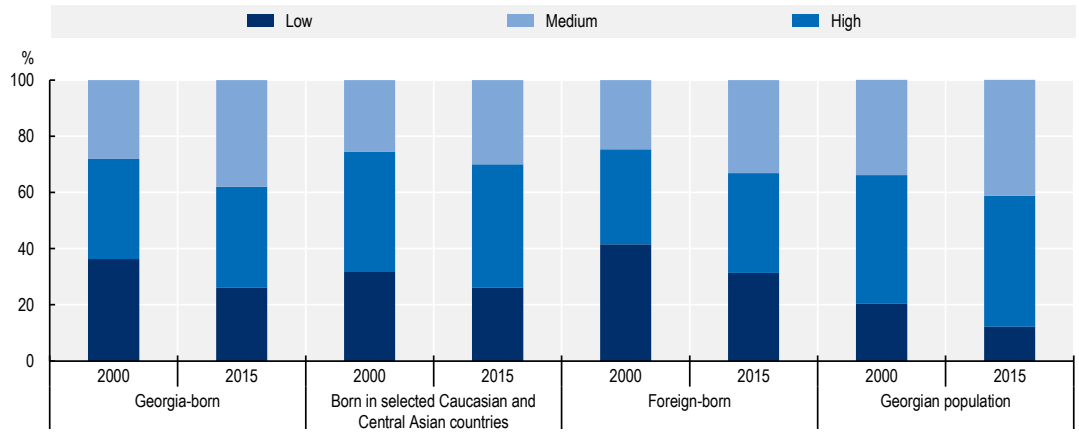
Distribution of education among Georgian emigrants in OECD countries

Georgian emigrants are not positively selected with regards to their educational attainment

In 2015/16, 72% of Georgian emigrants aged 15 years and over and living in OECD countries had at least an upper secondary education; 38% had a tertiary education (Figure 2.15). Since 2000/01, the educational level of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries has increased. The share of emigrants with a low level of education (up to lower secondary) fell from 36% to 26%, while the share of highly or tertiary-educated emigrants increased by 10 percentage points. In 2015/16, Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries were, on average, more educated than the foreign-born population and the emigrant populations from the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries.

In terms of educational attainment, however, Georgian emigrants are not positively selected among the Georgian population. In 2015/16, 41% of the Georgian population had a tertiary education, while only 12% were low-educated. (Labadze and Tukhashvili, 2013[20]) attribute the latter phenomenon to misguided education policies which generated an over-supply of university graduates. Thus, the educational profile of Georgian emigrants does not point to a case of ‘brain drain’.

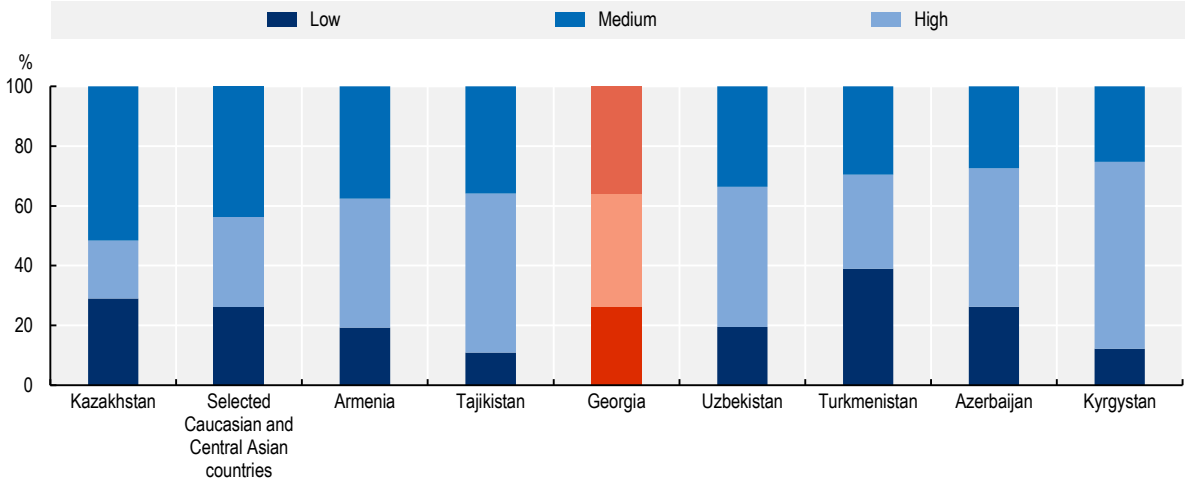
Figure 2.15. Level of education among Georgian emigrants in OECD countries, 2000/01 and 2015/16



Note: Reference population includes persons aged 15 and older.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2000-15; Georgia Population and Housing Census 2002; Georgia General Population Census 2014.

Compared to the emigrant populations of the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, Georgian emigrants are relatively better educated (38% of Georgian emigrants had a tertiary education compared to 30% among the reference group). However, the regional average seems to be disproportionately weighted by low-educated Kazakhstani emigrants in OECD countries, which comprise about half of the emigrant populations of the selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries (Figure 2.16). Emigrants from other countries in the reference group have a higher share of highly educated individuals than Georgia. This is particularly the case of countries with small populations – Kyrgyzstani, Tajikistani.

Figure 2.16. Level of education among migrants from Georgia and selected Caucasus and Central Asian countries in the OECD area, 2015/2016



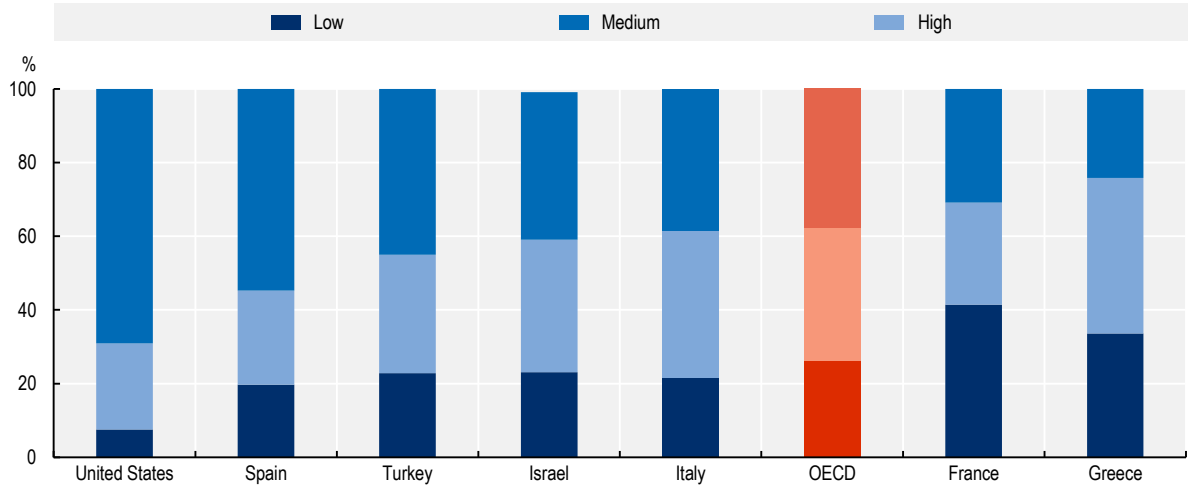
Note: Reference population includes persons aged 15 and older.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2000/01 and 2015/16.

There is also substantial heterogeneity in the educational attainment of Georgian emigrants across destination countries (Figure 2.17). Greece, the main destination, hosts the Georgian emigrant population

with the lowest share of tertiary educated (24%), reflecting the fact that the majority of Georgian emigrants, mostly female and middle-aged, moved to Greece in the 1990s and early 2000s for economic reasons (ICMPD, 2019[21]). Conversely, Georgian emigrants in the United States, a main destination for Georgian international students, have a high level of education: more than two-thirds hold a tertiary degree and less than 10% are low educated. Similarly, Georgian emigrants in Spain show high levels of educational attainment with more than half (55%) holding a tertiary degree. Such distribution is likely a reflection of the earlier flows of migration during the late 1990s, when Georgian emigrants arriving in Spain were mostly highly educated. Recent Georgian emigrants in Spain have, on average, a primary education and primarily come from rural areas in search of employment (ICMPD, 2019[18]).

In the Russian Federation, according to the 2010 Census, more than 30% of Georgians aged 15 and over were highly educated, while 32% of Georgian emigrants were low educated, suggesting that low-educated Georgians are more likely to migrate to the Russian Federation than OECD countries.

Figure 2.17.Distribution of education levels among Georgian emigrants aged 15 and older in selected OECD countries, 2015/16



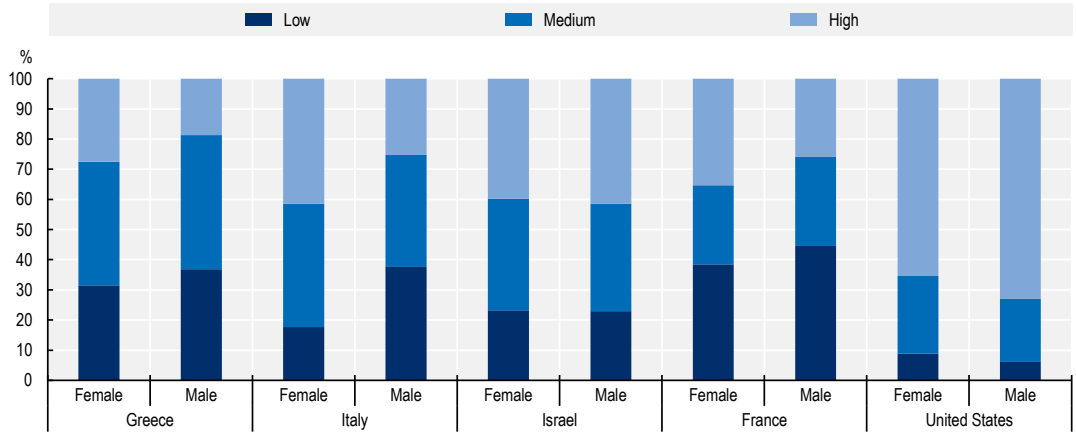
Note: Only countries with at least 10 000 Georgian emigrants aged 15+. OECD total includes all destination countries.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

Among Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries, women have a higher educational attainment

Differences in the educational level of Georgian emigrants also vary by gender and destination country (Figure 2.18). Italy and Turkey exhibit the highest educational gaps in favor of women: almost 40 and 50% of Georgian female emigrants hold a tertiary degree, respectively. Conversely, in Israel and in the United States, the educational distribution among Georgian emigrants is relatively similar among men and women.

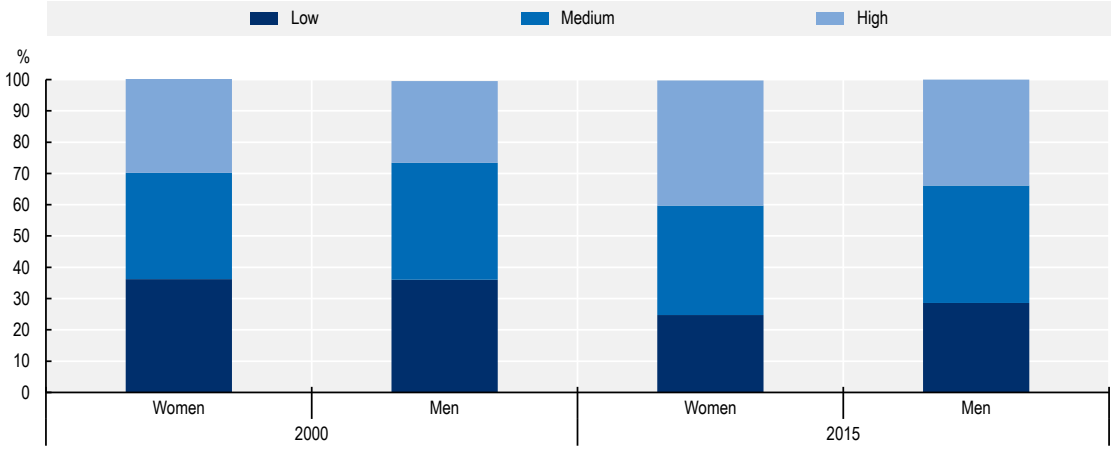
In the OECD area, the educational gap in favor of Georgian emigrant women has increased since 2000/01 (Figure 2.19). Whereas in 2000/01 the share of low-educated emigrants was virtually identical among men and women, in 2015/16 the share of low-educated men was 4 percentage points higher than among women. Similarly, the share of highly educated emigrants was 6 percentage points higher for women in 2015/16, whereas the gap between men and women was only 4% in 2000/01.

Figure 2.18. Level of education among Georgian emigrants by sex in main OECD destination countries, 2015/16



Note: Only countries with at least 10 000 Georgian emigrants. OECD total includes all destination countries.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

Figure 2.19. Level of education among Georgian emigrants by sex in OECD countries, 2000/01 and 2015/16

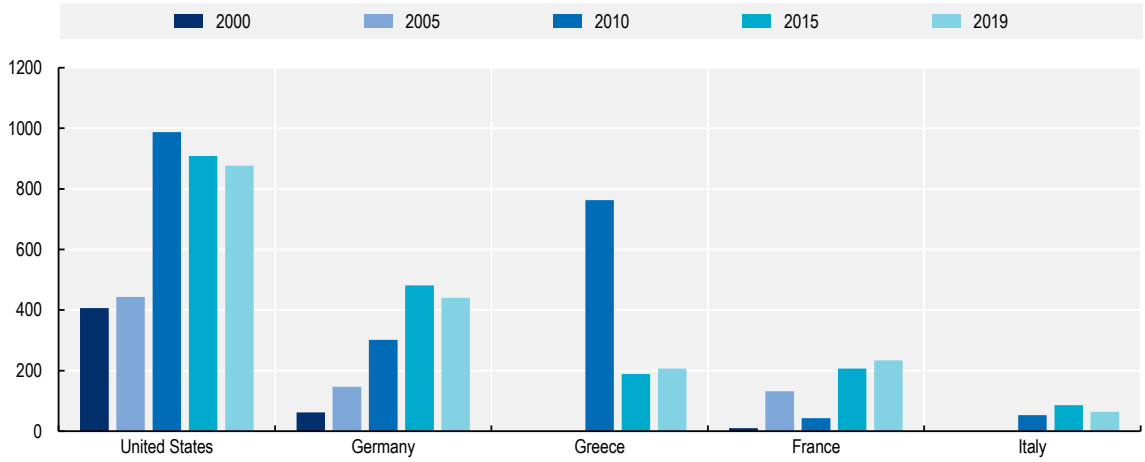


Note: Reference population includes persons aged 15 and older.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

Acquisition of nationality among Georgian emigrants in OECD countries

There are some notable patterns in the acquisition of nationality among Georgian emigrants in the main OECD destination countries – the United States, Germany, Greece, France and Italy. The figures are not available for Israel and discontinued for Turkey. While the number of Georgian emigrants who acquired American or German nationality increased significantly between 2000 and 2019, it dropped drastically in Greece by 2019.

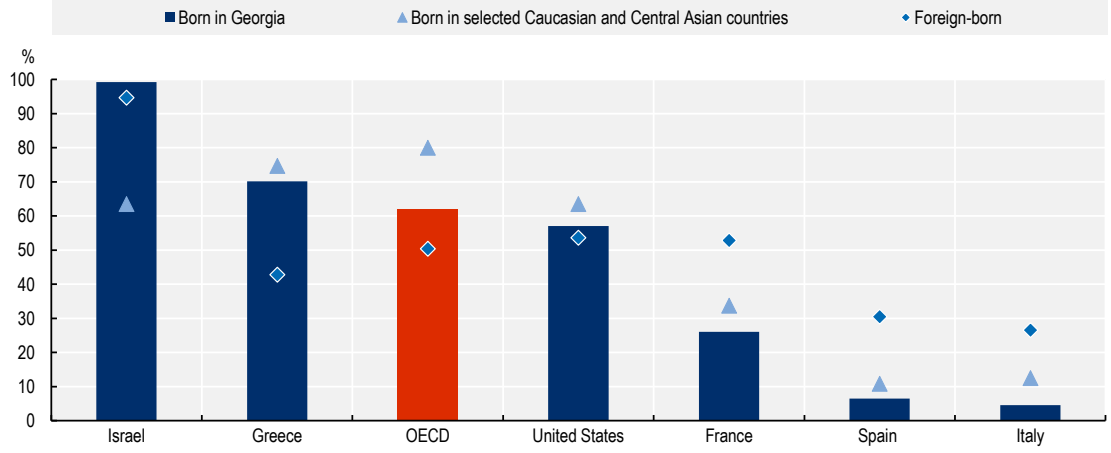
Figure 2.20. Number of Georgian emigrants who acquired the nationality of their host country, selected OECD countries, 2000-19



Note: Only countries with at least 20 000 Georgian emigrants. OECD total includes all destination countries.
Source: OECD International Migration Database, 2020.

Furthermore, the share of Georgian emigrants holding the host country citizenship in 2015/16 was high in three main destinations, Israel, Greece, and the United States: 99, 70 and 57%, respectively, held the nationality of these three host countries (Figure 2.21). Over 90% of naturalised Georgian emigrants in OECD countries were residing in these three countries.

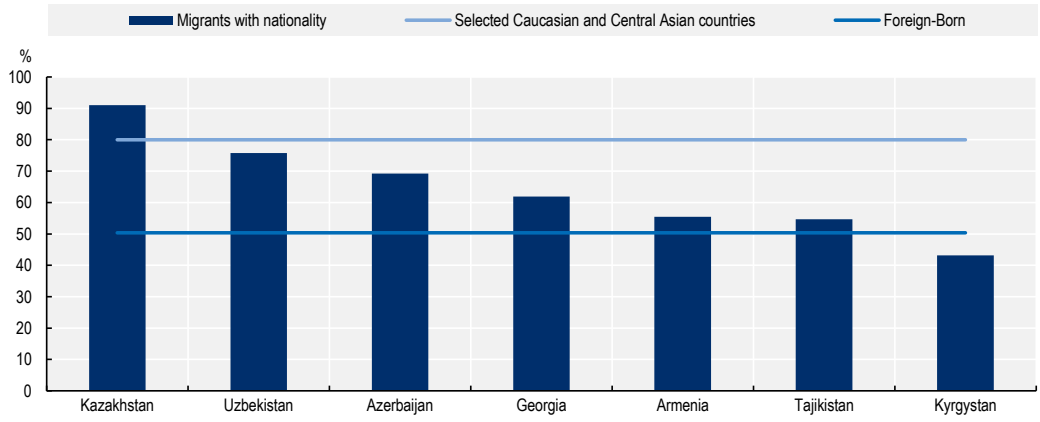
Figure 2.21. Share of Georgian emigrants holding the nationality of their destination country, 2015/2016



Note: Only countries with at least 10 000 Georgian emigrants. OECD total includes all destination countries.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

According to the most recent data available, 62% of Georgian emigrants held the citizenship of their OECD host country in 2015/16 (Figure 2.22), a rate 18 percentage points lower than for selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, and more than 10 percentage points higher than for the foreign-born population. Among the reference group, Georgia boasts the fourth highest citizenship acquisition rate after Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan.

Figure 2.22. Acquisition of nationality among emigrants from Georgia and selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries in the OECD area, 2015/16



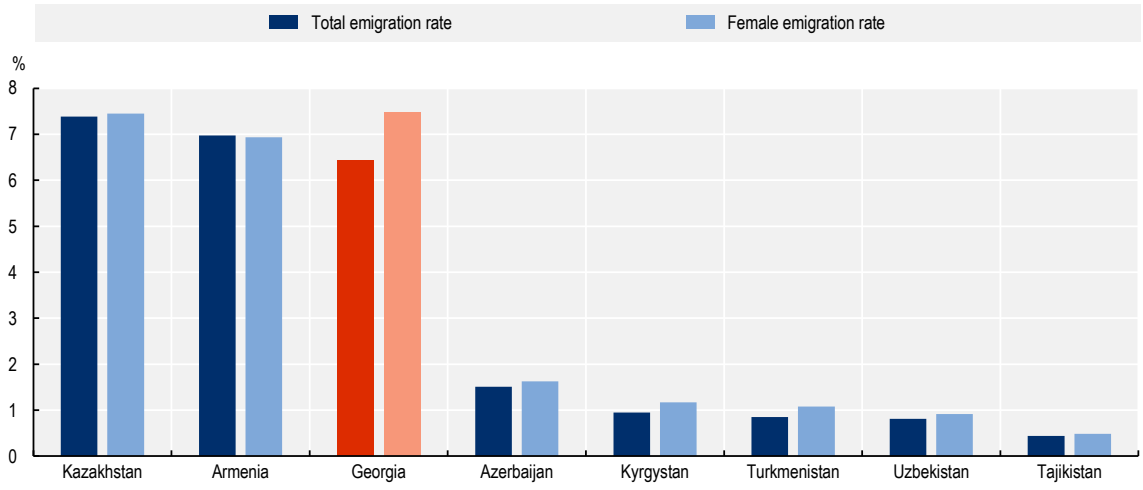
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16.

Emigration rates

Emigration rates are defined as the ratio between the number of emigrants from a specific country living in OECD countries and the total sum of the resident population of this country and emigrants living in OECD countries. While Georgia had the third highest emigration rate among the reference group of Central Asia at 6.4% in 2015/16, it held the highest female emigration rate at 7.5% in the same year (Figure 2.23).

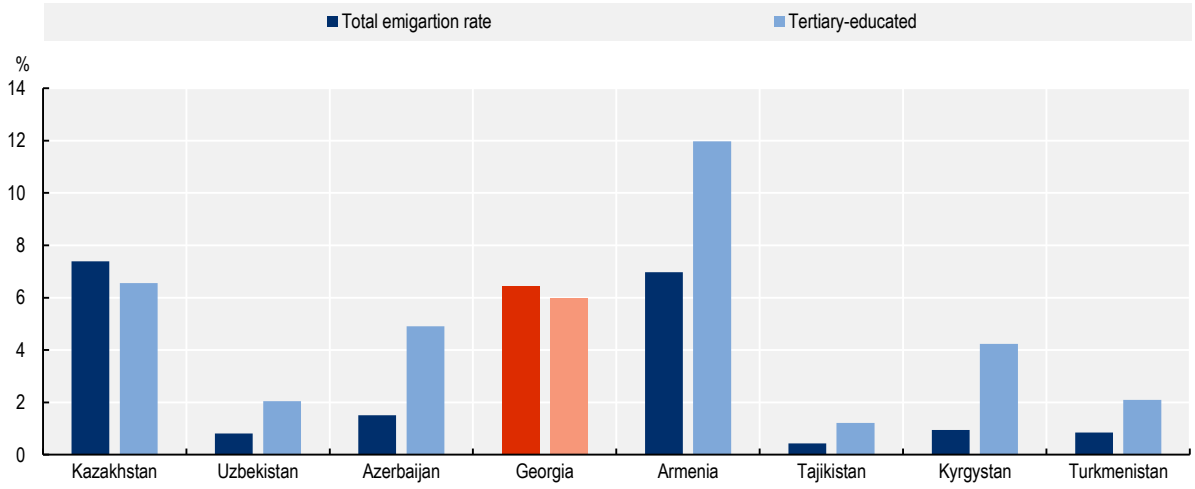
Furthermore, the emigration rate among the low-educated (12.9%) is much higher than among the medium and high-educated individuals (5 and 6%, respectively), suggesting that emigration from Georgia to some OECD countries is not primarily composed by high-skilled workers but responds to the demand for lower-skilled labour. This pattern is particularly noticeable in the cases of Greece and Turkey (ICMPD, 2014[12]), (OECD/CRRC - Georgia, 2017[1]) (Figure 2.24).

Figure 2.23. Emigration rates to OECD countries, 2015/16



Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2015/16; Lutz et al. (2018), *Demographic and Human Capital Scenarios for the 21st Century*, http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/835878.

Figure 2.24. Emigration rates to OECD countries by educational level, 2015/16



Note: Reference population includes individuals aged 15 and older.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries 2015/16; Lutz et al. (2018), *Demographic and Human Capital Scenarios for the 21st Century*, http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/835878.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed the number of Georgian emigrants in main OECD destination countries, as well as the overall evolution of the emigrant population since 2000. While highly concentrated in the Russian Federation, approximately 300 000 Georgian emigrants reside in the OECD area, mainly in Greece, Israel, Turkey, and the United States. The analysis of the Georgian emigrant population in comparison with other reference groups – emigrants from Caucasian and Central Asian countries, the foreign-born and native-born populations – shows that the Georgian diaspora in the OECD area is feminised and mainly of working age, suggesting a growing demand for female labour in Europe and increased restrictions to emigrate to the Russian Federation. Georgian emigrants' negative self-selection in terms of educational attainment and their comparatively higher citizenship acquisition rate also characterise the Georgian diaspora in OECD countries.

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3 Labour market outcomes of Georgian emigrants

This chapter analyses Georgian emigrants' insertion into the labour market focusing on the main OECD destination countries. It provides employment rates among emigrants between 15 and 64 years old in 2015/2016 and more recent data for the United States and Italy. The chapter also examines the dynamics of Georgian emigrants' insertion since the 2008 recession and the Eurozone debt crisis and analyses the main factors of emigrants' employment through the lens of gender, educational attainment, duration of stay, and citizenship. Finally, it presents data on the adequacy of their occupations vis-à-vis their qualifications and, lastly, the branch of activity they work in. The overall analysis systematically compares the Georgian diaspora with two reference groups, the foreign-born population living in the OECD area and the emigrant populations from seven selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

In Brief

Key findings

- In 2015/2016, Georgian emigrants faced difficulties integrating into the OECD labour markets. Similar participation rates to the average foreign-born population hide significant differences, as Georgian emigrants present significant unemployment rates among the active population (22%).
- Only 55% of working-age Georgian emigrants living in OECD countries were employed in 2015/2016, a rate 12-percentage points lower than for all migrants in OECD countries. The unemployment rate among Georgian emigrants is more than twice the unemployment rate among the native-born population.
- Employment rates vary significantly from one destination country to the other, with the highest rates observed in Israel, the United States and Italy (over 70%) and lower rates observed in Greece and France (below 50%).
- Female Georgian emigrants face more obstacles in the labour market than their male counterparts. However, the gender employment gap (6 percentage points) is much narrower than for the native-born population (15 percentage points).
- The higher the education level of Georgian emigrants, the higher their employment rate: 60% of those with a tertiary education were employed versus 45% of low-educated emigrants. This pattern, however, varies substantially from one destination to another.
- Higher employment rates among the tertiary-educated Georgian emigrants hide a significant inadequacy between their qualifications and their occupations in OECD countries: 60% of highly educated Georgian emigrants were overqualified in 2015/2016.
- Substantial over-qualification rates translate into a high concentration in low-skilled occupations in the OECD area. In 2015/16, 59% of the Georgian emigrants were employed as services and sales workers or held elementary occupations, mainly as personal care workers, cleaners or helpers. There are, however, differences between men and women and across destination countries.
- In Italy, about two-thirds of Georgian emigrants, mainly women, are employed as personal care workers. Male emigrants work in elementary occupations (approximately 80%). In the United States, Georgian emigrants primarily hold transportation-related occupations. The Georgian diaspora is mainly concentrated in the services sector in both countries.

Labour market participation and employment among Georgian emigrants

Georgian emigrants face high unemployment rates

Among the 190 500 Georgian emigrants of working age (between 15 and 64 years old) in OECD countries, 70% participated in the labour market in 2015/16, meaning almost a third were inactive. This participation rate was lower than for emigrants from other countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the overall foreign-born population of working age. It was also lower than the participation rate of the native population by 2 percentage points. Nevertheless, although Georgian emigrants' participation rate is almost on par with other comparison groups, it hides substantially lower employment rates. Indeed, only 55% were

employed in 2015/2016, a rate 10 to 12 percentage points lower than for the reference group from Central Asia, the foreign-born and native-born populations in OECD countries. This high vulnerability among Georgian emigrants in the labour market reflects high unemployment rates: one out of five active emigrants is unemployed (22%). Such unemployment rate was more than twice the rate for the foreign-born and the native-born populations (9.5%).

As presented in Figure 3.1, in 2015/16, employment rates of Georgian emigrants varied substantially from one destination to another. Less than half of Georgian emigrants were employed in six of the main destination countries. In France and Turkey, the sixth and third main destinations, 33% and 37% of Georgian emigrants were employed.

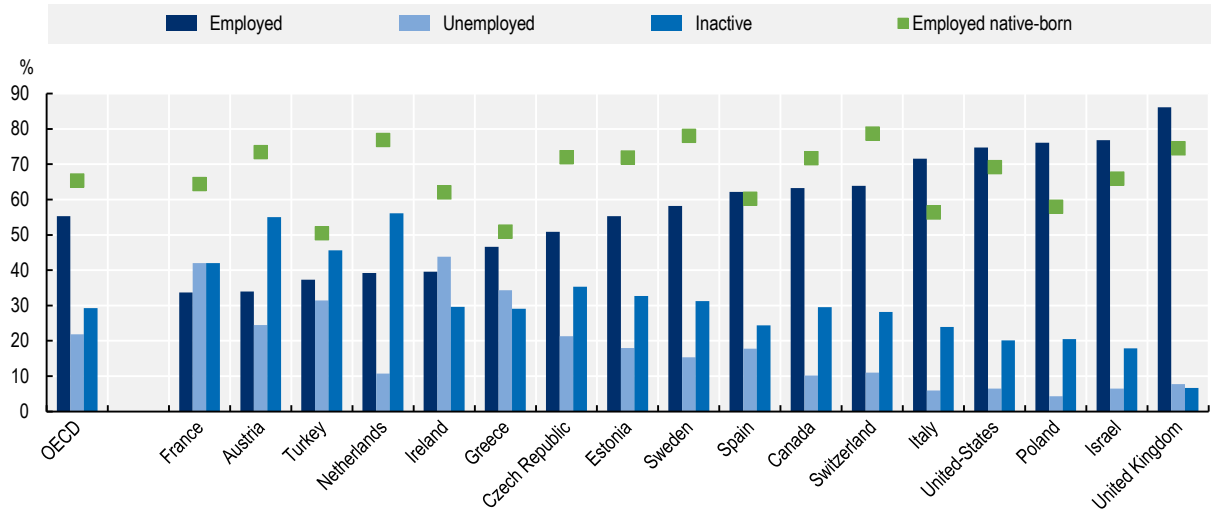
In Greece, top OECD destination country, 47% of Georgian emigrants were employed in 2015/16 but dealt with high unemployment and inactivity rates (34% and 29%, respectively). However, the Greek economic situation differs substantially from the two former countries as the employment levels of the native-born were only 4 percentage points higher than for Georgian emigrants (+31 and +13 percentage points in France and Turkey, respectively). More than half of the Georgian emigrant population was employed in Eastern European countries, but the rates remained significantly lower compared to the native population.[1] In Spain, employment rates were slightly higher, with 62% of Georgian emigrants employed compared to 60% of the native-born population.

In Italy, where most of Georgian emigrants are women (81% of the working-age population), 71% were employed in 2015/2016, a rate 15 percentage points higher than among the native-born. The majority of the non-working Georgian population between 15 and 64 years old were inactive rather than unemployed in Italy.

In Israel, the second main OECD destination, and in the United States, employment rates were among the highest, as three-quarters of the working-age population were employed in 2015/2016. In the former country, the employment rate exceeded that of the native-born by 11 percentage points and by 6 percentage points in the United States. Unemployment rates were also similar in both countries affecting 6.5% of active Georgian emigrants.

Figure 3.1. Labour market status of Georgian emigrants by main OECD destination country, 2015/16

Share of the working-age population (share of the active population for unemployment rates)



Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

Georgian emigrants' situation in the labour market also differs from the situation of the average emigrant to the OECD area (Figure 3.2). In France, Turkey and Greece, employment rates were lower than those observed among the foreign-born. France presents the largest employment gap, with an employment rate among the foreign-born that is 22 percentage points higher than for Georgian emigrants. The employment rates of emigrants from selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries were also higher by 5 percentage points. In Turkey and Greece, the employment rate among Georgian emigrants was marginally lower than for the Central Asian countries but remained significantly lower than the employment rate among the foreign-born.

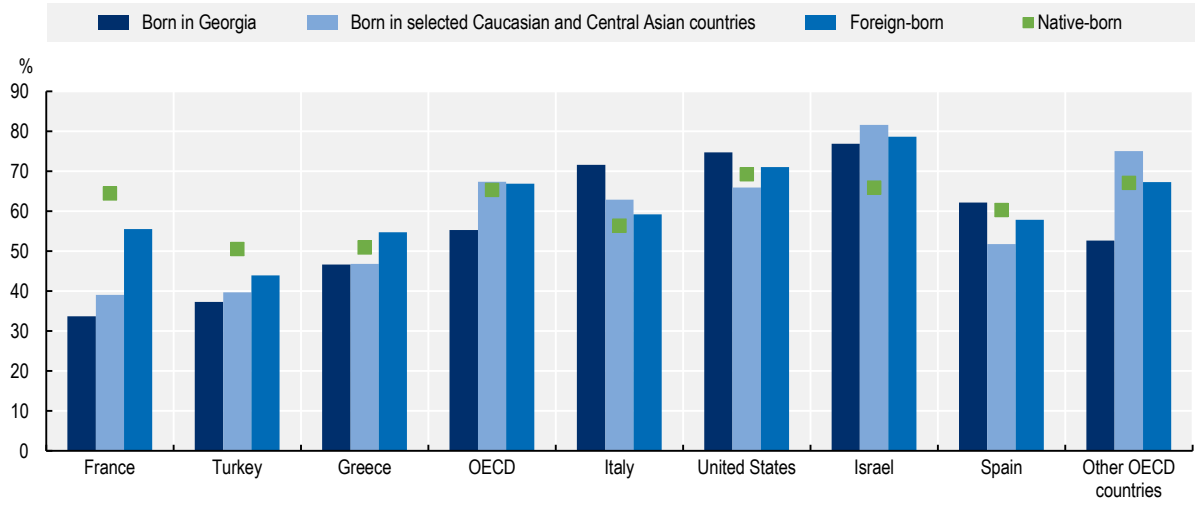
Israel is a particular case as Georgian emigrants present higher employment rates than native-born, but fare worse than the foreign-born population. The higher educational attainment of migrants, including those from Georgia, offers a partial explanation for the better insertion in the Israeli labour market as it is further analysed below.

In Spain, Italy, and the United States, the employment rates of Georgian emigrants exceeded those of emigrants from selected Central Asian and Caucasian countries by at least 9 percentage points and those of the foreign-born by 4 percentage points in Spain and the United States. Italy constitutes a very particular case to the extent that the employment rate of Georgian emigrants exceeded that of the foreign-born and native-born populations by 12 and 15 percentage points, respectively.

These results hold with more recent data from the United States and Italy. Indeed, based on 2017/2019 data for the United States and 2017/2020 for Italy, employment rates among Georgian emigrants are substantially higher than among the foreign-born. The gap even widens in Italy: 80% of Georgian emigrants are employed compared to 60 and 58% of the foreign and native-born. This latter result is driven by women's rate of employment, related, in turn, to their high concentration in personal care occupations, as analysed below.

Figure 3.2. Employment rates in main OECD destination countries among Georgian emigrants, 2015/16

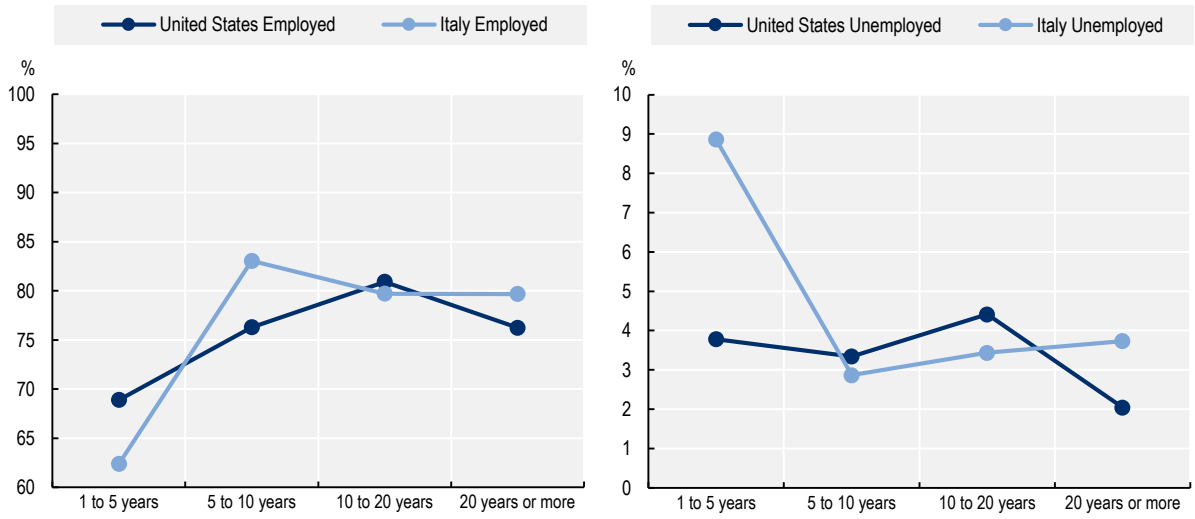
Share of the working-age population



Note: Selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in addition to Georgia.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

Results from recent data also underline the role that the duration of stay plays in the insertion of Georgian emigrants into the American and Italian labour markets. As shown in Figure 3.3, the longer they have resided in these countries, the higher their employment rates. Indeed, less than two-thirds of Georgian emigrants living in Italy (62%) or the United States (69%) for five years or less are employed, 28% are inactive and 4 to 9% are unemployed. This latter rate declines significantly when they have spent more than five years in both countries. Similarly, employment rates increase by more than 13 and 20 percentage points in the United States and Italy as the duration of stay increases. Employment rates stabilise at around 80% over ten years of residence in these countries. Nonetheless, the acquisition of the host country's citizenship does not seem to be an advantage in accessing the labour markets in both countries, contrary to the experience of migrants from other countries (at least in the United States).

Figure 3.3. Evolution of employment and unemployment rates among Georgian emigrants by duration of stay in Italy and the United States, 2017/2020 and 2017/19



Source: Istat Labour force survey 2017/20, Census bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2017/19.

Regarding non-OECD destination countries, available data show that in the Russian Federation, where the Georgian-born population of working age is more than twice as numerous as in all OECD countries combined, 63% of Georgian emigrants were employed in 2010/11. Although this country's economy did not recover fully from the 2008 financial crisis, Georgian emigrants' employment rates remained lower than for emigrants from Caucasian and Central Asian countries and for the native-born population (-5 and -4 percentage points). This gap was even larger when compared to the overall immigrant population, whose employment rate reached 69%. Furthermore, in 2010/11, inactivity rates were significantly higher for the Georgian-born population. One-third of Georgian-born emigrants were inactive. Typical individual characteristics of Georgian migrants should not explain these heterogeneities as no major differences in education levels or duration of stay between these different groups of immigrants are observed.

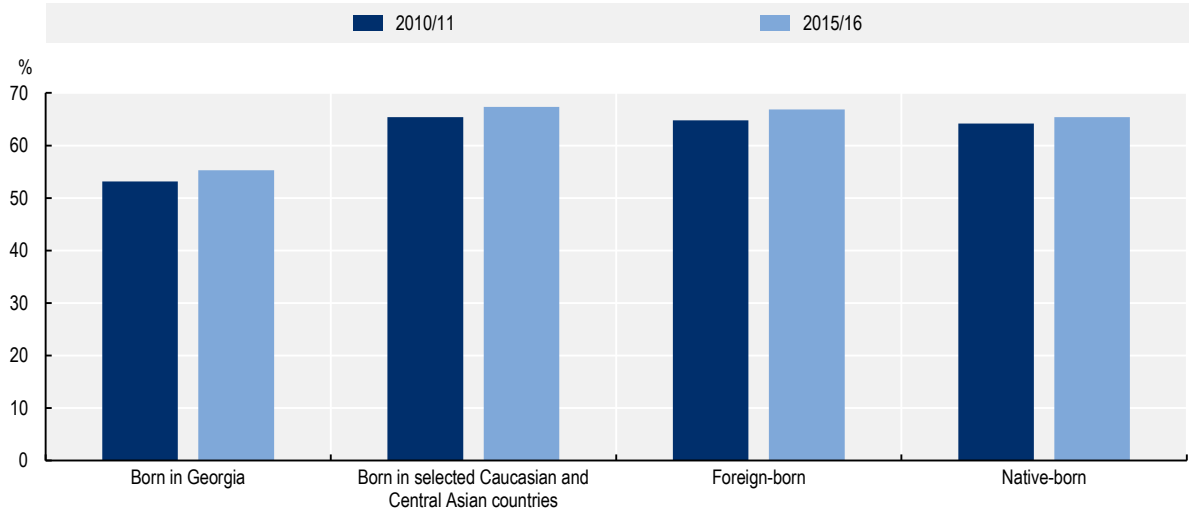
Georgian emigrants' access to the labour market in OECD countries has improved since 2010

Between 2010/2011 and 2015/2016, the labour market situation of Georgian emigrants in the OECD area improved marginally, as shown in Figure 3.4. Indeed, their employment rate increased by 2 percentage points, from 53 to 55%. It followed the same evolution as the employment rate of the foreign-born population. While the increase is relatively higher than for the native-born population (+1 percentage point), employment

rates among Georgian emigrants remained substantially lower than among the native-born population by 10 percentage points.

Figure 3.4. Evolution of employment rates in OECD countries by country of birth, 2010/11 and 2015/16

Share of the working-age population



Note: Selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in addition to Georgia.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2010/11 and 2015/16.

The evolution of Georgian emigrants' employment rates varies significantly across destination countries, reflecting the different stages of economic recovery in the aftermath of the 2008 global recession and the 2010 European debt crisis (Figure 3.5). In Turkey and Greece, markedly affected by the recession, Georgian emigrants' employment rates have remained relatively stable since 2010 (at the low levels of 37% and 47%, respectively). In Turkey, the employment gap with the native-born population widened.

In Italy, still very much affected by a restrictive fiscal policy and high-interest rates, the share of Georgian emigrants in employment fell by 5 percentage points compared to 2010/11 (77%). Even if this downturn concerned the foreign-born and native populations, it affected Georgian emigrants to a much larger extent, the drop being five times higher than for all migrants. This decline in employment rates did not reflect an increase in the unemployment rate among the Georgian emigrants in 2015/2016, but an increase in inactivity (+8 percentage points). Nevertheless, the inactivity rate of Georgian emigrants in Italy remained lower than among the foreign and native-born by 6 and 12 percentage points, respectively. The employment rate decreased to a similar extent in France (- 6 percentage points).

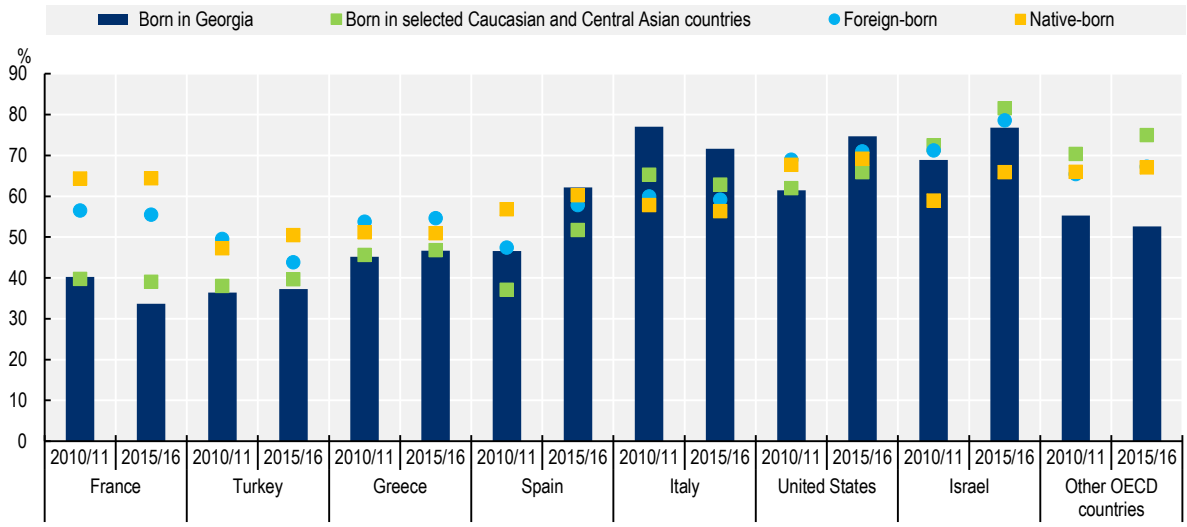
Spain, the United States and Israel witnessed the highest increases in employment rates among the main OECD destination countries but followed relatively different trajectories compared to the foreign- and native-born populations (Figure 3.5). In Israel, Georgian emigrants' employment trajectory followed the same path as both the foreign and native-born populations. In Spain, which is one of the most affected countries by the Eurozone crisis, the employment rate of Georgian emigrants increased by 15 percentage points. This positive evolution also applies to the foreign-born and emigrants from Central Asian and Caucasian countries. This pattern resulted in employment rates among Georgian emigrants exceeding those of the native-born by 2 percentage points. The convergence in employment rates between foreign and native-born populations in Spain is partially explained by the growth in the foreign-born population of working age as the driver of total

working-age population growth in Spain, given that the native-born population continues to age (Defensor del Pueblo, 2020[1]).

In the United States, the employment rate of Georgian emigrants increased by 13 percentage points between 2010/11 and 2015/16, at a much higher pace than for emigrants from selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, the foreign- and native-born populations. While the employment rate of Georgian emigrants was lower than the foreign-born's in 2010/11, it exceeded it in 2015/16 by 4 percentage points.

Figure 3.5. Evolution of employment rates of Georgian emigrants in main OECD destination countries, 2010/11 and 2015/16

Share of the working-age population



Note: Selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in addition to Georgia.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2010/11 and 2015/16.

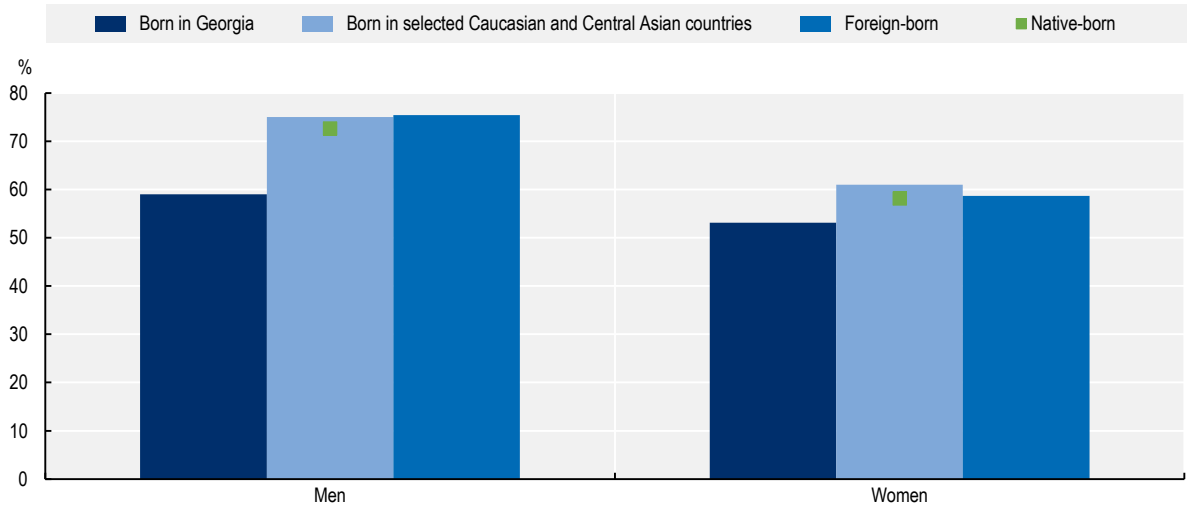
The gender gap in Georgian emigrants' employment widened in 2015/16

Foreign-born women face a double challenge in the labour market of their destination country as they face both the general gender inequalities in the labour market and the obstacles of being an immigrant (OECD, 2020[2]). For Georgian emigrants, the overall increase in employment rates in 2015/16 was mainly driven by male emigrants' improved access to the labour market. While the gender employment gap in OECD countries was relatively narrow in 2010/11 at 2%, it widened in 2015/16 to 6% (Figure 3.6). The employment rate of female Georgian emigrants increased by only 1 percentage point to 53% versus 5 percentage points (59%) for their male counterparts. The fact that recent Georgian emigration is mainly female should partially explain this trend. Indeed, more than 80% of the Georgian emigrants that arrived between 2010 and 2015 in OECD countries were women who emigrated notably due to unfavourable local cultural norms regarding women's role in the household and difficult labour market conditions (Hofmann and Buckley, 2011[3]). As seen in the cases of the United States and Italy above, emigrants face more obstacles in integrating into the destination's labour market in the first years after arrival.

Nevertheless, the gender employment gap was still substantially narrower than for emigrants from selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries, foreign- and native-born populations of OECD countries. The difference in employment rates between female and male emigrants, regardless of the country of birth, was almost three times higher than for Georgian emigrants. The employment rates of female Georgian emigrants remain lower than their native-born counterparts by 5 percentage points.

Figure 3.6. Employment rates by country of birth and sex, 2015/16

Share of the working-age population



Note: Caucasian and Central Asian countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in addition to Georgia.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

The overall gender employment gap among Georgian emigrants hides some important discrepancies across destination countries (Figure 3.7). These differences mainly stem from differences in employment sectors between men and women (Vanore and Siegel, 2015[4]).

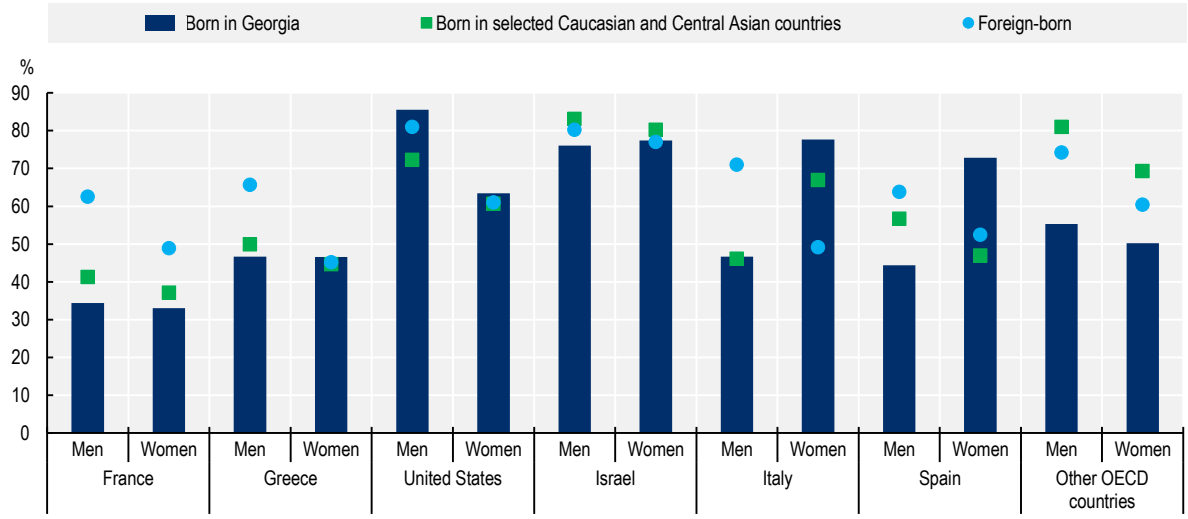
The gender employment gap is almost null in Greece, France and Israel. Israel stands out as Georgian female emigrants had a similar employment rate (77%) to that of the foreign-born female population, which was only 3 percentage points lower than the foreign-born male population. Women born in Georgia were also likelier to be employed than their native-born counterparts, regardless of their sex. In Greece, the gender employment gap among Georgian emigrants was significantly lower than for the foreign-born and native-born population (+20 points). Almost half (47%) of female Georgian emigrants were employed, a rate 5 percentage points higher than the one observed among native-born women.

The United States presents the highest gender employment gap: 69% of women born in Georgia were employed in 2017/2019 versus 84% of men. Educational attainment or duration of stay do not account for differences in employment rates. Although the gender employment gap is significant, women born in Georgia remain employed at similar rates as the native-born women, whose employment rate is 5 percentage points lower than their male counterparts.

Spain and Italy present a gender employment gap favouring Georgian women: 73% of Georgia-born women were employed in 2015/16 versus 44% of men. According to the most recent available data, female Georgian emigrants' employment rate is 27 percentage points higher than their male counterparts in Italy. Women born in Georgia are likelier to be employed than foreign-born and native women; employment rates even reach higher levels than native-born men in both countries. Education levels of Georgia-born women were substantially higher than men's. In Italy, where women represent 89% of the Georgian diaspora in 2017/19, their average duration of stay is also substantially longer than it is for men, affecting insertion into the labour market.

Figure 3.7. Employment rates among Georgian emigrants by sex and main OECD destination country, 2015/16

Percentage of working-age population



Note: Selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in addition to Georgia. Turkey is excluded from this figure, the sample size of male Georgian-born population being too small.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

The employment rate of Georgian emigrants improves with their education levels

As expected, Georgian migrants benefit from better insertion into the labour market as their education level increases (Figure 3.8). More than half (60%) of those with a high education level were employed in 2015/16. This share drops by 4 percentage points for those with a medium education level, which corresponds to an upper secondary education. It lowers by another 11 percentage points (45%) for those with low level of education (lower secondary at most).

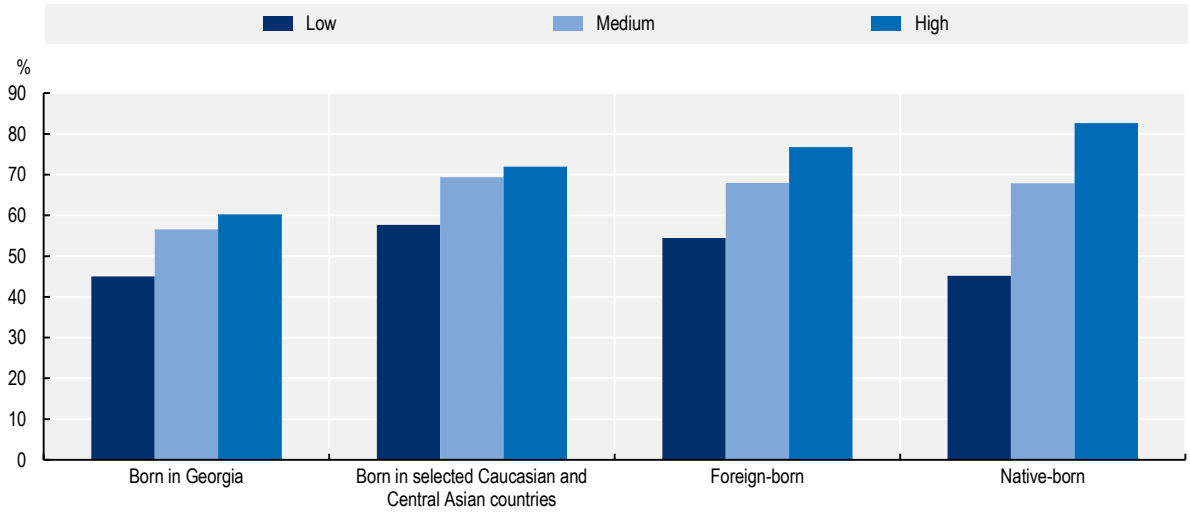
Georgian emigrants fared worse than the foreign- and native-born populations at all education levels. Employment levels were lower than emigrants from selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries. Georgian emigrants were also more vulnerable as their unemployment rate was significantly higher than for the foreign- or native-born populations.

At low levels of education, Georgian emigrants were working in the same proportion as the native-born population. The latter result should be interpreted with caution, as the usual minimum level of education requested in OECD countries is higher than lower secondary education. Those with a medium education level born in Georgia were 11 percentage points less often in employment than the foreign and native-born populations. The gap enlarged further for those with a high level of education, as they were 17 and 23 percentage points less often in employment than all high-educated foreign and native-born, respectively.

These lower employment levels can be partly explained by various barriers Georgian emigrants face in their OECD destination countries, notably the potential lack of language skills and employment record, and inadequacy between the qualifications provided by the Georgian education system and the European standards. This result holds in most of the main destination countries. However, levels of insertion into the labour market per education level differ from one country to another.

Figure 3.8. Employment rates by country of birth and educational attainment, 2015/16

Percentage of working-age population



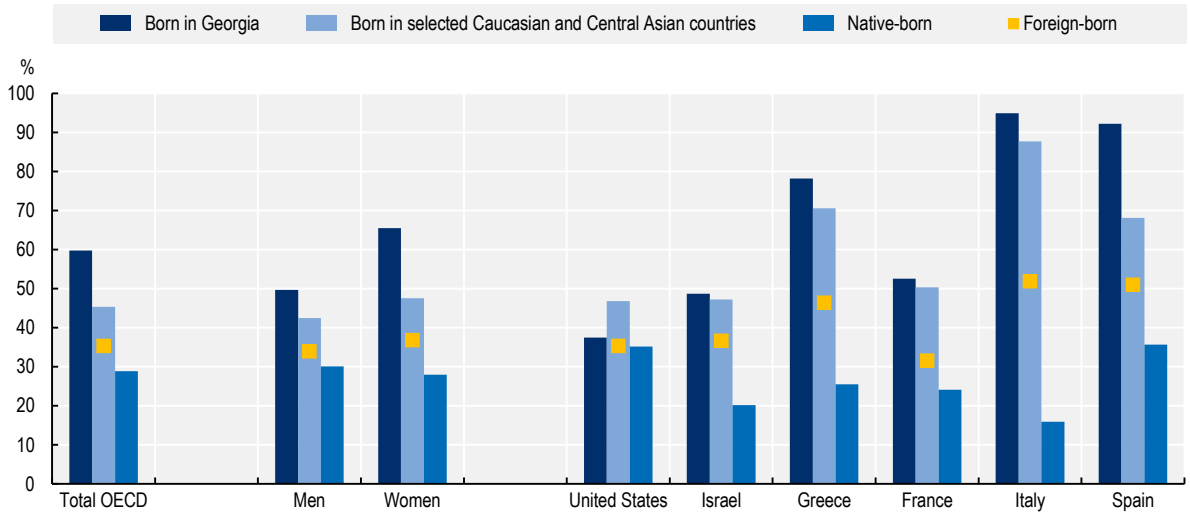
Note: Selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in addition to Georgia.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

Occupations and skills of Georgian emigrants

Highly educated Georgian emigrants in employment are significantly overqualified

Higher employment rates of Georgian emigrants who attended tertiary education hide high inadequacy between their occupations and their qualification level (Box 3.1). In OECD countries, 60% of tertiary-educated emigrants born in Georgia held a position that required less skills than they actually had in 2015/16 (Figure 3.9). This share was significantly higher than for high-educated emigrants born in selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries and the native-born population (45 and 29%, respectively). Tertiary-educated Georgian women are more overqualified than their male counterparts (48 and 28%, respectively) and the gap is larger than among the foreign-born population.

Figure 3.9. Over-qualification rates among Georgian emigrants by sex and main OECD destination country



Note: Percent of high-educated workers. Selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in addition to Georgia. Types of occupations are not available in Turkey.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

Box 3.1. Over-qualification: Definition and measure

Over-qualification occurs when an individual's level of formal education is higher than what the occupation held requires. It is estimated as the proportion of persons with a tertiary education degree who hold a low- or medium-skilled occupation. Education levels are measured using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED); high education level corresponds to ISCED Level 5 and higher. The level of qualification required for a position is measured using the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO); high-skilled jobs are those part of the first, second and third major groups.

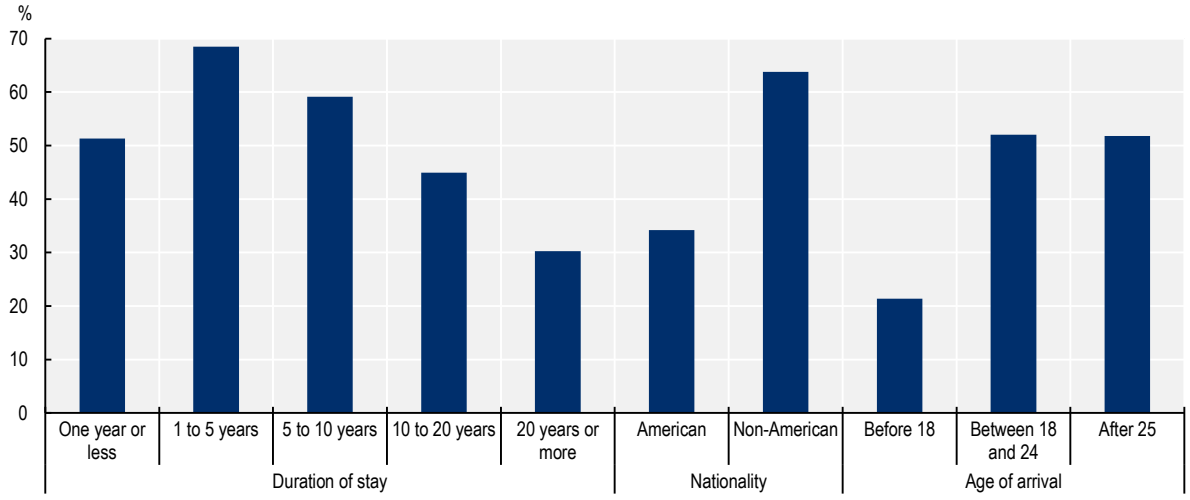
Among immigrants, the over-qualification rate is an indicator of the degree of transferability of human capital across countries, as the qualifications and linguistic skills acquired in the country of origin are not always readily transferable in the host country, although it may also capture discrimination in the labour market, asymmetries of information on job availability, etc.

The low employment rate of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries, at all education levels, makes any analysis of over-qualification rates per destination country very sensitive from one data source to the other. Nevertheless, the share of overqualified Georgian emigrants appears to vary substantially from one country to the other. In Greece, 78% of Georgian emigrants were overqualified, a result confirmed by mixed-methods research (ICMPD, 2014[5]), while it concerned half of the Georgian-born population with a high level of education in Israel.

In the United States, over-qualification concerns almost half of the high-educated Georgian emigrants in 2017/19 (48%). It corresponds to a share of 8 percentage points higher than for all emigrants from selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries and 14 percentage points higher than for foreign- and native-born populations. Contrary to the OECD trend, men tend to be more overqualified than women: 52% of men born in Georgia were overqualified versus 44% of women. Different factors can explain lower over-

qualification in the United States, including longer duration of stay, acquisition of citizenship and having attended tertiary education in the United States. Indeed, as shown in Figure 3.10, the share of overqualified Georgian emigrants decreases almost linearly the longer the time they spend in the country. More than two-thirds of those living in the United States for less than five years are overqualified, lowering to 44% and 30% for those settled for more than 10 and 20 years, respectively. Relatedly, the acquisition of American citizenship improves access to high-skilled jobs: 34% of Georgia-born Americans are overqualified, compared to 64% of Georgian emigrants without the American citizenship. This result holds when controlling for the duration of stay. Employers' recognition of tertiary education quality also plays an important role in accessing high-skilled positions. Only 21% of Georgian emigrants who attended college or university in the United States are overqualified, compared to 52% of those who arrived after the age of 18.

Figure 3.10. Georgian emigrants' over-qualification rate by duration of stay, citizenship and age of arrival in the United States, 2017/19



Note: Percent of high-educated workers.
Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017/19.

Georgian emigrants are highly overrepresented as personal care workers

This inadequacy between occupations and skills reflects in an overrepresentation of Georgian immigrant workers in low- and medium-skilled occupations in 2015/16. As presented in Figure 3.11, nearly a third of the Georgian population of working age held a service or sales occupation (32%). This share was twice as high as it was for foreign- or native-born workers. A quarter of Georgia-born workers with a high level of education occupied such positions (26%), only 2 percentage points lower than low-educated Georgian emigrants.

14% of the Georgia-born workforce held a personal care-related occupation, with substantial differences between men and women. Two-fifths of women held a service or sales position, more than double the share of their male counterparts (16%). Less than 1% of male Georgian emigrants were personal care workers, compared to 21% of women. Georgia-born men held mainly sales (6%), protective services (4%) and personal service (4%) positions.

A quarter of working Georgian emigrants held an elementary occupation (27%), almost three times more often than native-born workers. Most of them were cleaners and helpers, corresponding to the first position occupied by Georgian emigrants in OECD countries (the United States excluded) in 2015/16. Again,

Georgia-born women occupied such positions at higher rates than men. Most women in elementary positions were helpers and cleaners (29% of all women working). High-educated Georgian emigrants also held such positions in high proportions (19% of them were helpers or cleaners).

Figure 3.11. Occupation types among Georgian emigrants in OECD countries, by sex, 2015/16

Note: The United States is not included as a destination country as its classification of occupations differs from other OECD countries.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

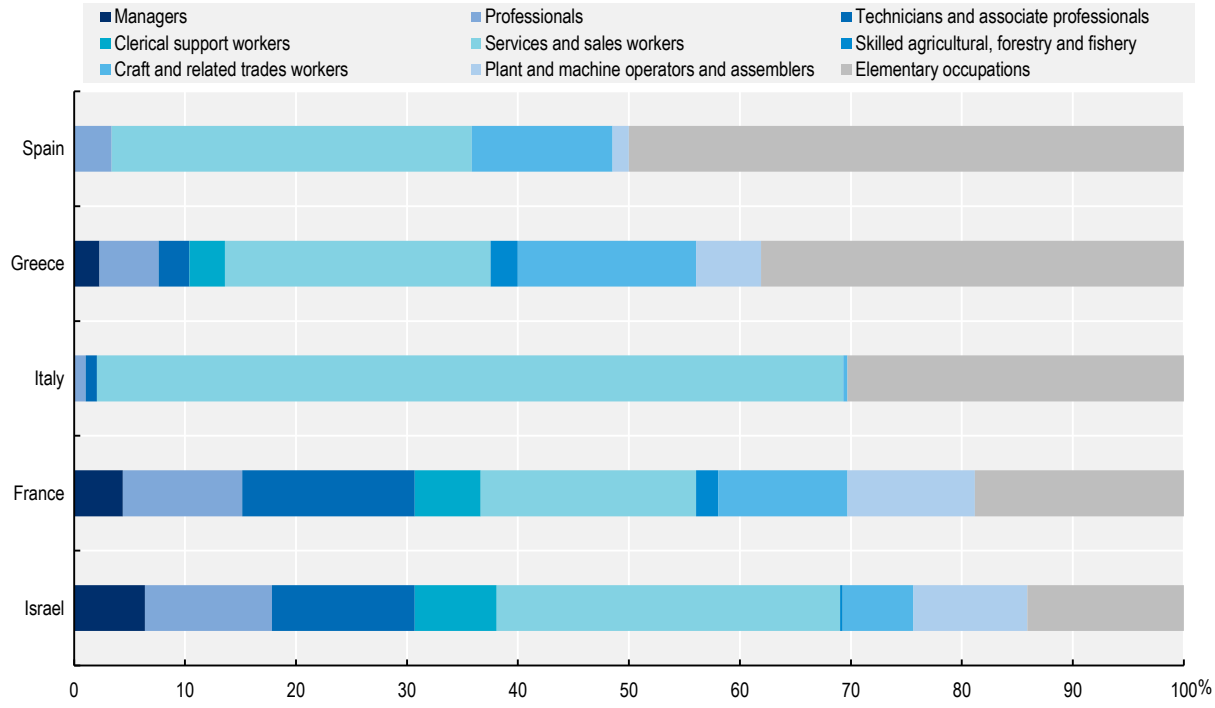
Conversely, Georgian migrants in OECD countries were underrepresented in high-skilled jobs in 2015/16. Indeed, only 7% of them held a scientific or intellectual position, mainly as health professionals (3%). It corresponded to half the share of emigrants from selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries. Another 7% of them were technicians or associate professionals. Including managerial positions, less than 20% occupied a high-skilled position. Georgian women occupied high-skilled positions at lower rates than their male counterparts, but the difference was marginal (21% and 17%, respectively). As expected, high-educated emigrants occupied such positions at higher rates: a third held high-skilled positions while the share for those with a low and middle level of education did not exceed 10%.

Craft and related trades occupations concentrate 11% of Georgian emigrants, and plant and machine operations and assemblage an additional 6%. In such occupations, men are employed at higher rates than women (39% versus 3%). Georgian emigrants with low or medium education levels occupied these positions more often than high-educated ones. Only 4% of Georgian who attended tertiary education held a position as plant and machine operator or assembler.

Georgian emigrants' main occupations differ according to their destination country

The distribution of working Georgian emigrants by types of occupations differs across destination countries (Figure 3.12). However, in the main destination countries, they remained largely concentrated in elementary and services and sales occupations. In Greece, 38% of Georgia-born workers held an elementary occupation in 2015/16, three-quarters of whom occupied a position of cleaner or helper. According to ICMDP (2014[5]), these positions rarely abide by the law. Consequently, Georgia-born domestic workers are often subject to exploitative conditions, with little legal recourse at their disposal. A quarter of working Georgian emigrants in Greece are services and sales workers. One Georgian emigrant out of ten occupies a high-skilled position, half of them as professionals.

Figure 3.12. Occupation types among Georgian emigrants by country of destination, 2015/16



Note: The United States is not included as a destination country as its classification of occupations differs from other OECD countries.
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) 2015/16.

In Israel, 31% of Georgian emigrants occupied high-skilled positions, 25% as professionals or associate professionals. These numbers were close to those observed for Georgia-born workers in France. Services and sales occupations concentrate 31% of Georgian migrants in Israel and 19% in France. In both countries, less than 20% of workers born in Georgia held an elementary occupation. Although no recent data are available for Turkey, IMCPD (2014[5]) research suggests that a significant share of Georgian migrants occupy seasonal positons in agricultural plantations.

In Italy, 2015/16 and 2017/20 data confirm the concentration of Georgian emigrants in services and sales occupations. About two-thirds of Georgian emigrants are personal care workers. More specifically, a large number work as caretakers of the elderly or the disabled (ICMPD, 2019[6]). Women (72%) mainly occupy these jobs, whereas the very large majority of men occupy elementary occupations (about 80%). Almost no Georgian emigrants work in high-skilled positions in Italy.

In the United States, Georgian emigrants primarily hold transportation and moving materials occupations (mainly men): 13% declared working in transportation-related jobs in 2015/16 and in 2017/19, 6 percentage points higher than for native-born workers. A not negligible share of working Georgian emigrants also work in health-related occupations: whether as health practitioners or health support workers. Exact numbers are not fully reliable but oscillate between 10 and 20% depending on the data source.

Georgian emigrants in Italy and the United States mainly work in the services sector

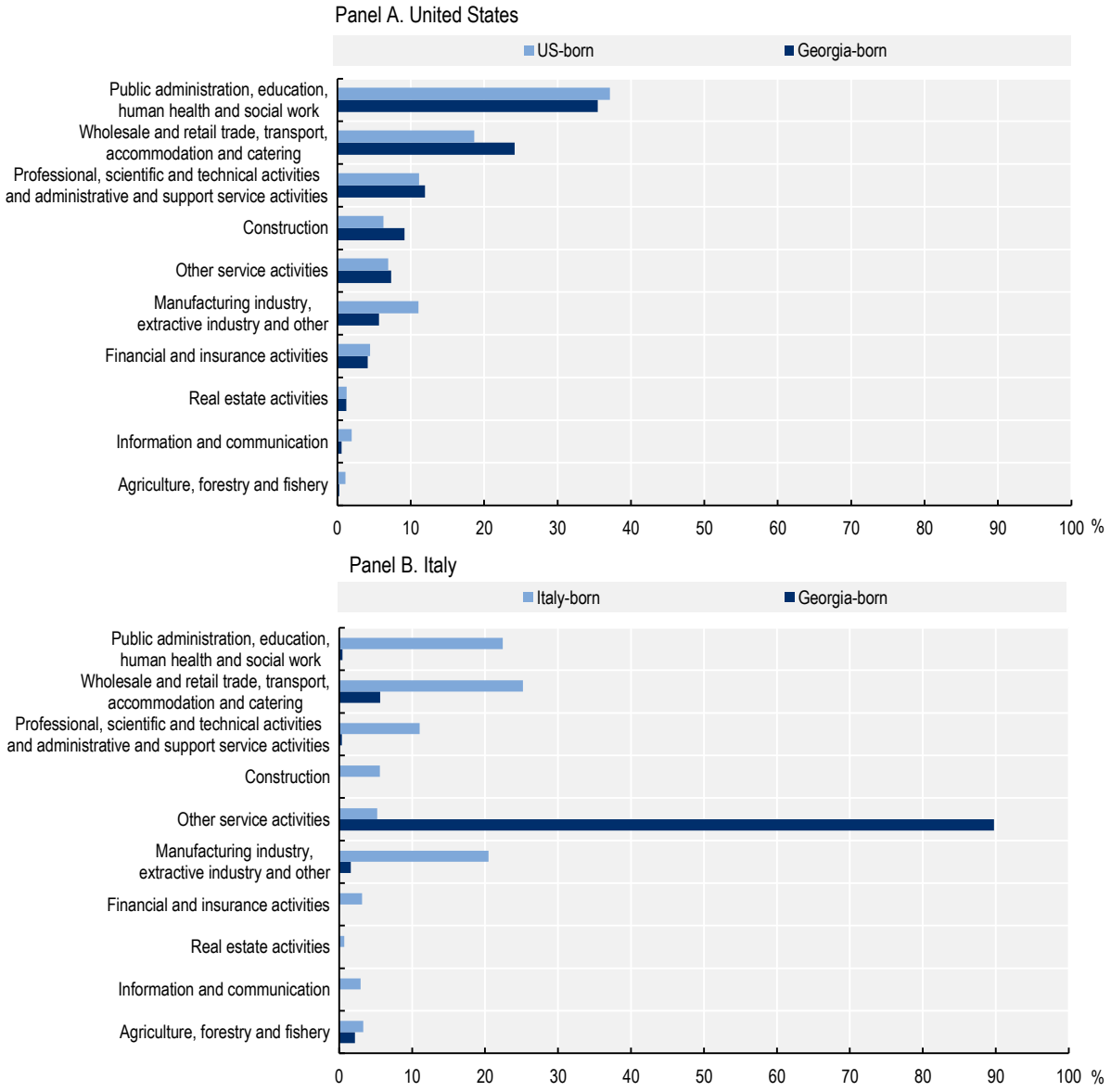
In Italy and in the United States, over the 2017/20 and 2017/19 periods respectively, Georgian emigrants' activity is largely oriented toward the services sector (see Figure 3.13). In the United States, only 15% of Georgia-born workers work in the primary or secondary sectors, while 23% of the foreign-born population work in the agriculture, the industry or the construction branches. The rate is also 3 percentage points less than for native-born workers. In Italy, the gap is even larger as a third of foreign-born workers are employed

in these sectors compared to less than 5% of Georgia-born workers. The relatively small male population from Georgia in Italy partially explains this trend, as mainly men work in primary and secondary sectors of activity. Indeed, almost half of men born in Georgia work in these sectors in 2017/20 while almost none of their female counterparts do. Most of the working Georgian emigrants in Italy work in other service activities, which include domestic work and elementary occupations.

In the United States, more than a third of workers born in Georgia work in the public administration, education, and health-related sectors (36%), almost on par with the native-born. A quarter of them works in trade, transport, accommodation and catering activities, a significantly higher rates than migrants from selected Caucasian and Central Asian countries and all foreign-born workers.

Figure 3.13. Sector of activity among Georgian emigrants in the United States and Italy

Percentage of the working-age population



Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017/19; Istat Labour force survey 2017/20.

Conclusion

Georgian migrants struggle to integrate into the labour market in OECD countries. The working-age population's relative high participation in the labour market hides significant unemployment rates. Roughly half of the Georgia-born population was employed in 2015/16 and 22% of the active population was unemployed. As such, the Georgian diaspora displays a lower labour market insertion compared to the foreign-born population in OECD countries.

However, employment rates of Georgian emigrants vary substantially across destination countries. Insertion into the labour market is even more difficult for women born in Georgia. But the employment gender gap is narrower than for the native-born population of the OECD. In addition, the higher the education levels, the better the access to employment in OECD countries. Still, the higher employment rates of Georgian emigrants with a tertiary education hide significant inadequacy between their qualifications and their job skills' requirements. Indeed, a substantial share of Georgian workers holds services and sales occupations, as well as elementary occupations. In some countries, they are overrepresented in personal care occupations; in Italy, women mainly work as caretakers of the elderly. In Greece, they particularly hold domestic occupations often with difficult working conditions.

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Note

[1] This trend does not apply to Poland but the size of Georgia-born population in Poland was relatively small at the time.

Annex A. Data sources on Georgian emigrants

OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC), 2000/01, 2005/06, 2010/11 and 2015/16

The Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) covers the OECD destination countries for which data were collected both in 2000/01, 2005/06, 2010/11 and 2015/16. The main sources of DIOC data are national administrative registers and population censuses. In the censuses carried out in 2000/01, almost all OECD countries collected information on the country of origin of emigrants, so that it became possible to have an comprehensive overview of the numbers of migrants in OECD countries (for more general information on DIOC, see d'Aiglepierre et al. (2020[1]). Where censuses were not available or incomplete, labour force surveys were used as a substitute.

DIOC contains information on populations from more than 200 countries of origin residing in OECD destination countries. The main variables are country of residence, country of birth, gender and level of education. Other variables – age, duration of stay, labour force status and occupation – can be cross-tabulated with the core variables but not always with each other. Data on employment and occupation are available for the population aged 15 years or older. In Chapter 3 of the review, the focus is on individuals of working age, that is those between 15 and 64 years. Two variables contain information on citizenship.

OECD International Migration Database (2000-19)

The *OECD International Migration Database* covers annual flows of legal migration. The annual flows of foreign population inflows and outflows by nationality are estimated on the basis of national population registers, residence and/or work permits, and specific national surveys. This database is largely based on the individual contributions of national correspondents (the OECD Expert Group on Migration) and covers most OECD countries as well as the Baltic countries, Bulgaria and Romania. The data has not necessarily been harmonised internationally and should therefore be interpreted with caution. For example, flows to the United States only include permanent migrants, while other countries also include temporary migrants such as seasonal workers, students or refugees. In addition, the registration criteria and the conditions for obtaining a residence permit vary across countries, which has important repercussions on the measurements obtained. Finally, irregular migration is only partially covered, so it is important to note that actual migration flows are likely to be higher than legal migration flows.

Eurostat database on residence permits issued to third-country nationals (2008-20)

Data on residence permits concern third-country nationals (persons who are not citizens of the European Union) receiving a residence permit or authorisation to reside in one of the European Union member states, the EFTA countries (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) or the United Kingdom. Data are based on administrative sources, with the exception of the United Kingdom, and are provided mainly by home departments or immigration agencies. As the United Kingdom does not have a residence permit

system, the data for this country relate rather to the number of citizens from outside the European Union who arrive in the territory and are authorised to enter the country under certain immigration categories. A residence permit corresponds to any authorisation valid for at least 3 months issued by the authorities of a member State allowing a third-country national to legally reside on its territory.

Gallup World Poll Data

The Gallup World Poll covers a large range of behavioural and economic topics and provides information on self-reported emigration intentions of the Georgian population. This survey is conducted in approximately 140 countries based on a common questionnaire, translated into the predominant language of each country. Each year since 2006, more than 100 questions have been asked to a representative sample of around 1 000 persons aged 15 and above. In some countries, Gallup collects oversamples in cities or regions of special interest. The survey collected a total of more than 15 000 observations from Georgia (about 1 000 per year from 2006 to 2020). However, data related to emigration intentions are not available for 2020.

Caucasus Barometer Survey

The Caucasus Barometer Survey is an annual household survey conducted by the Caucasus Research Resources Centre (CRRC) in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan since 2004. The Survey covers social, economic and political issues as well as political attitudes and perceptions. The Caucasus Barometer Survey conducted in Georgia provides information on the intention to emigrate temporarily or permanently within the Georgian population aged 18 years old and above (excluding populations living in territories affected by military conflict, South Ossetia and Abkhazia). Sample sizes vary between 1 800 and 2 500 across years. In 2019 the sample size was 2 317 respondents. Questions relating to emigration intentions are not available in 2020 Survey.

International Students (UOE Database)

The UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat (UOE) data collection on education statistics is compiled from national administrative sources, as reported by ministries of education or national statistical offices. To capture student mobility, a distinction is made between resident foreign students – i.e. foreign students who are resident because of their parents' prior migration or their own – and non-resident foreign students, who came to the country expressly to pursue their education. International students are defined as students with permanent residence outside the reporting country, and data on non-citizen students are used only where information on non-resident foreign students is unavailable. Data on international students are only available from 2013 onwards.

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Talent Abroad

A Review of Georgian Emigrants

In recent years, Georgia has undergone important economic, social and political transformations. Given the significant emigration of the Georgian population and the recognition of the contributions of the diaspora, Georgian authorities are seeking to better understand this pool of talent residing abroad, which has great potential to contribute to the economic and social development of Georgia. This review provides the first comprehensive portrait of Georgian emigrants in OECD countries. By profiling Georgian emigrants, this review aims to strengthen knowledge about this community and thus help to consolidate the relevance of the policies deployed by Georgia towards its emigrants.

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